000 to speak the special "languages" of their particular cults. [184] [789] [794] One aspect of this initiation,[a] which has been carried over almost unchanged into some parts of Haiti (though not into Mirebalais) is the ordeal by fire, in which the novitiate must plunge his hand into a pot of boiling cornmeal and rest his foot on the red-hot stones which support the pot.

The role of the family deities has already been given; of the third category, that of the personal forces, one finds first of all the soul, of which each individual is conceived as having three. More important is the cult of Fa, or Destiny, which came to Dahomey from the Yoruba, and is a part of a widely spread system of discovering the destiny of a man that characterizes not only West Africa and the remainder of the continent, but most of the Old World. In Dahomey today this end is carried out by assessing the significance of the various permutations and combinations of sixteen palm kernels "thrown" by the diviner. In addition there exist traditionally earlier and less "official" methods of divining, which in the main are those which have survived in the New World. ● [776] [171] Intimately associated with both the soul and the destiny of man is the deity who is at once a member of the great pantheons and one of the most personal of all the gods, Legba, whose African importance is attested by the extent to which he is today worshipped in many parts of the New World, and by his universality in Haiti. From the point of view of Dahomean philosophy Legba may be regarded as the god of accident, who gives to man a "way out" in a world ruled by an otherwise inexorable fate. Gross in his appetites and capricious, he is, nevertheless, beloved by the Dahomeans, and though his name is usually erroneously translated by the European term "devil," no appellation could be farther from reality. Of particular significance for his role in Haitian life as guardian of the crossroads and of the *barrière* is his place in Dahomean theology, since it is said: "Before the gods can

[a] [i.e., The initiation of devotees by priests into the religious cults of Dahomey—Analyst]

eat, Legba must be fed" — in other words, Legba is interlocutor between man and gods. 000

Another figure in this category of personal deities is Dã. Briefly, it would seem that Dã is an abstraction, used to designate anything sinuous, which moves silently, undulates, and cannot be controlled. It is the principle of movement, of energy, of life itself, and, by extension, of fortune. Often spoken of as a serpent, Dã is nevertheless but the principle of mobility. If not cared for, it will weaken, be preyed upon by others of its kind, and a man's fortune will disappear. Why, then, has this Dahomean serpent cult in its Haitian form been given so important a place in the writings on Haitian religion? In the first place, the principle represented by Dã is symbolized by serpents. Again, a myth describes the rainbow serpent to be one of a pair of great snakes, the other of which lies coiled beneath the earth to support its weight, that it may not fall into the sea. But most important of all is the regard for the snake in Whydah, where it is believed to be the mythical animal ancestor of the large relationship group whose center is that coastal city. The rainbow serpent is Dã Aido Wedo, [776] sometimes known as Dumballa Wedo, whose importance as a Haitian deity is mentioned in all works which treat of Haitian religion, while Dangbe, so often found in the literature on Haiti, is, however, this Whydah totem which with time has also been adopted more widely. Thus much that has been [794] written of serpent-worship in this region of West Africa — [771] the place of origin of the patterns of most of the religious cults found in Haiti today — is the result of misconception resulting from a failure to analyse this belief to its ultimate significance.

It remains but to speak of magic. Magic in West Africa is not an isolated phenomenon, but is closely integrated with the other aspects of religion. In Dahomey magic charms are sold by professional workers of magic, but the derivation of the

843 782 539 *malin esprit barré chemin qu'en moment delivrance moin apé rivé. Nou' toutes Invisibles, les Saints, les Morts, Marassa, vini assisté moin jou'-a.*— I ask you all to come deliver me, that you open the way for me, that you do not allow evil spirits to bar my path when the time of the delivery approaches. May you all, Invisible Beings, the Saints, the Dead, Twins, come to my aid on that day."

843 782 776 Should one of the couple be a devotee of Damballa or Erzilie, both of them jealous gods, a chicken or two is added to the customary offerings, and some gift pleasing to the god, such as a dress or suit of his sacred color, is made him. Normally no further precautions need be taken. 843 789 (993) If, however, the pregnant woman has had one or two miscarriages, she and her husband go to a *vodun* priest, preferably a woman, and obtain a "medicine" to be used in bathing the abdominal and vaginal areas as a precaution against *mauvaises aïres,* the werewolves believed to consume children in the womb. (955) (993) If the pregnancy this time terminates successfully, some of the same medicine is rubbed on the child shortly after birth and several times during the ensuing weeks, but should the infant later fall ill, the *vodun* priest brings herbs and makes a smoke-fire to drive away the werewolves that are believed still to be hovering about.

844 782 At the onset of labor, if either the father or the mother of the unborn child is vowed to Damballa, another sacrifice is made to this god and to the spirits of twins, giving a *couvert sec* and one or two chickens and pigeons to each. If a *vodun* priest has determined what deity protects the child, a sacrifice is also given this spirit, and prayers are said to the spirits of twins, the dead of the families of both the man and the woman, and all other supernatural beings, saints of the Church and *vodun* gods alike.

844 Meanwhile the woman has been placed on the ground on

589 truth, but the matter is recognized as one which concerns
836 only her husband and herself, and if he is willing to keep
836 her, it is his own affair. Consensus of opinion in Mirebalais
369 is that the percentage of girls who do not have pre-marital
sexual relations is relatively small, but the belief is expressed
that chastity is more prevalent among country women than
among those of the town, where, in turn, it is more frequent
than in larger centers such as Port-au-Prince. Even though
836 pre-marital relations are commonplace, however, the pregnancy
848 of an unmarried girl is regarded as both reprehensible
and unfortunate, and she is severely beaten for it by her
family. In such cases, if the father of the unborn child will
take the girl, his parents are sent to bring her, but where the
parents of the man refuse to ask for the girl because they do
not approve of her, then, if he still desires her, he must himself
face the anger of her parents. Should he not wish to come
for her, she may either remain with her family or seek work
in another community. In any event, her child will be well
cared for by her family, and no reproach will attach to it because
of the circumstances of its birth.

585 Before a mating of any type is consummated, the familial
782 spirits must be notified of the approaching event so that they
may be well disposed toward it, for no union where this
776 is neglected can enjoy happiness or peace. One Mirebalais
woman was pointed out as an object lesson of the necessity of
doing this. Though a devotee of several gods, neither she nor
her husband was willing to perform the necessary rites for
her gods before their marriage. She was suffering from an
[753] acute case of melancholia after the birth of her first child, and
[828] the prevailing opinion was that she was going mad because
of the neglect of her duty toward her deities. Shortly before
a woman goes to her husband, therefore, a *couvert sec* for the
Rada deities is given both by herself and by her betrothed.
If the family of either the young man or the woman possess
deities of the powerful Pétro group, more inclusive offerings

are necessary, and the elders of the family must see to it that 585
these gods are instructed not to trouble the newly married 782
pair. If either or both of them are devotees of deities such 776 ●
as Damballa, Erzilie, Ogun, or Aida Wedo, all of whom are
known to be extremely jealous, these gods must be specially
placated.

For the actual ceremony the couple appear each with a 585
candle in hand, pour water on the ground in the family house 782
of worship, and kneel and pray. The god may "come to 787
the head" of the girl or the man or some relative of each and
advise them. If it asks a gift at this time, it is either given at
the moment or a promise is made to fulfill the request later.
If the spirit objects to the marriage, it is wooed with offerings.
Thus, for example, should the young woman be possessed
by the serpent-god Damballa, who, speaking through
his devotee, registered an objection to the marriage, the girl
would be given such gifts as a white silk dress, white silk
stockings, or some other valued object in the sacred color of
the god, or some perfume which might also serve to mollify
him. Or should the man's deity who registered objection be
Ogun, the god of war, a fine red kerchief might be offered [822]
in honor of this god, whose color is red.*

The dead of both families are also notified by means of a 585
visit to the cemetery. The days for these pilgrimages are Mondays 769
or Fridays, and the pilgrimages must be made during 782
either the morning or the early afternoon, since visits at night
are only for evil purposes. As candles are lighted, announcement
is made to the family dead of the marriage which is soon
to take place, and their good offices are asked to bring it happiness.
After all the family dead have been invoked, a candle is [776]
lighted before the large cross for Baron Samedi, and another
behind it for Gede, the first as the ruler of cemeteries and the
graves of the dead, and the second as his handy-man. Another
candle is lighted for the "abandoned souls" of the
family, who have died without consecration, and yet another

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other one which has been known there for many years, principally in the west, which bears the name of *Vaudoux*. . . . But it is not only as a dance that the *Vaudoux* merits consideration, for it occurs under circumstances which assign to it a place among the institutions where superstition and bizarre practices play a considerable part."[2]

171 771 776 [192]

In Dahomey, whence the term has come, *vodun*, as has already been stated, signifies "god" and is a general name for all deities. This source of the word has likewise long been known, as a reading of St. Mery shows:

> "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on which depend all the events that come to pass on this globe."[3]

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Similarly, de Vassière[4] quotes with approval a parallel definition from Peytraud, while modern Haitian writers also emphasize its Dahomean origin.[5] This meaning of the word had, however, undergone a change in its new home even during pre-Revolutionary times, for, according to St. Mery, the "all-powerful and supernatural being" had come to be a non-venomous serpent that stood as a symbol "for all those who professed this same doctrine." Today in Mirebalais even this identification is a thing of the past, though the prominence given serpent-worship in Haiti by most writers[6] would make it reasonable to suppose that elsewhere in the island serpents are maintained by priests of the *vodun* cult and play an important role in the rites at which the gods are worshipped. Indeed, one priest from Arcahaie encountered in Mirebalais mentioned the fact that in his own temple he kept such a snake. Yet in our valley no worship of serpents as such was encountered, and there were even those who declared that they had no hesitation in killing any snake, though these brave assertions could not be tested. Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

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Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

may perhaps be said to have come to this: Adherents of the 184
African cults refrain from killing the snake, and should they 771
do so by accident, the African custom of giving ceremonial 776
burial to any creature having supernatural importance is fol- 825
lowed as an atonement. Where this is omitted, difficulties of 782
so serious a nature are felt to threaten that to prevent them a 766
priest of the cult is called upon to offer up a sacrifice and to beg forgiveness even after the little ceremony of burial has been performed.[7]

Inasmuch as *vodun* flourishes in Mirebalais despite the 771
minor role of serpent-worship, it is evident that in seeking to 171
understand its nature and its philosophy other aspects must 177
be considered. Two historical facts must be kept constantly in mind in making this analysis, for without them, what follows would be meaningless. The first is that *vodun* derives from a background of African theology and ceremonialism. The second is that the Negroes have continuously been subjected to the influence of Catholicism during the centuries that have passed since their introduction into the island.

Yet another point may prove suggestive in providing a use- 184
ful point of view for an analysis of the *vodun* cult. This bears 771
upon a difficulty impossible and happily unnecessary to resolve in the field study of religion, which arises out of the degree of variation in answers to questions dealing with the same point. These answers differ not only according to the status of the individual in the cult, since layman and priest have understandably different concepts of the functions of deities based on unequal degrees of expert knowledge, but the extent to which an individual has religious interests or is indifferent to them influences the nature of his responses. A fundamental fallacy results from the fact that except where there is an officially sanctioned theology — which makes for dogma, and often for perfunctory worship, in contrast with the living dynamic nature of Haitian peasant belief and ritual — there are no " real " answers to questions in the field of religion. The

184 771 student pursuing the "correct" statement will find that no matter how painstaking his method and how extensive his precautions, the versions of different persons can never be entirely reconciled, unless a false appearance of truth is given to his findings.[8]

178 771 776 If the underlying philosophy of the universe held by the Haitian is summarized, as it can be abstracted from his expressions of belief and from his observed behavior, this philosophy might be phrased somewhat as follows: The ruler of the universe is God, its Creator, who shares this task with His son Jesus, the saints of the Church, and the Holy Ghost. Man has been endowed with a soul, and the soul, which has come from God, returns to God for judgment and, if necessary, for punishment at the end of its sojourn on earth. From Africa — *Guinée* — the Negroes brought other deities, termed variously *loa, mystères,* or *saints,*[9] and these deities have been inherited through succeeding generations by the descendants of those who brought them to Haiti. The specific function of the African spirits in the Haitian system was given in the following terms by one of their devotees: "The *loa* are occupied with men, their task is to cure. They can make a person work better than he otherwise would. When the *loa* possess people, they give helpful advice. But they cannot do the things that God does. They can protect a garden, but they cannot make a garden grow, for streams, rain, and thunder come from God." Another statement clearly shows the same concept: "God made the *loa,* but did not make them so they might do evil. [424] [425] When a man purchases a *loa* for money, that spirit will do evil as well as good, but God becomes angry and will not accept these bad spirits into the sky, and He drives them away."

776 In the ordering of his daily life, however, the forces which are foremost in the consciousness of the Haitian make up the triad expressed in the phrase "*les mystères, les morts, et les marassa* — the *loa,* the dead, and the twins." Because of their special character, an examination of the twin cult and the cult

776 of the dead must be deferred for a later chapter. Similarly, the discussion of the final element in Haitian religion, the belief in magic, must also be reserved for later pages, stressing here only its separate identity from the worship of the *loa*, with which it has been too often confused.[10]

787 794 The most striking element in the *vodun* cult is the manner in which the gods possess their devotees. Despite the fact that this is the aspect of Haitian religion that seems to the casual observer its least restrained and least disciplined, possession occurs according to well-defined rules and under specifically defined circumstances. And since it is through an analysis of possession that the clearest understanding can be reached of the meaning of the *loa* to those who worship them, the manner in which they influence the lives of their devotees and exert their powers for good or evil, possession may be treated at some length.[11]

794 787 776 [192] When a person is possessed for the first time, the spirit which is said to animate him is known as a *loa bossal*, an " untamed " god. The word *bossal*, which in the early days was applied to newly arrived Africans,[12] has always been a term of contumely, and today the same feeling-tone is continued through the belief that since all things in the universe are subject to observable regulation, and animals and plants and human beings must all live according to these rules, the *loa*, as members of society, may not manifest the unrestrained and often dangerous traits of unpredictable behavior which characterize them before they have been " baptized " and thus brought under proper control.

Baptism of a deity most often occurs when a boy or girl is possessed by a family *loa*, especially if it is one which gives that knowledge of healing and divination meant by the word *connaissance*. Sometimes, though not always, this possession is violent, and the prospective devotee rages about the house, destroying whatever comes to hand. On occasion, since custom frowns on possession at a ceremony not given by the family of

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787 the one possessed, possessions of this kind mean either that the
776 *loa* needs baptism; or that, being baptized, its devotee has
been negligent in serving the god.

796 No actual rite of baptism of a *loa* — or, as it is also termed,
776 of *lavé tête,* "washing the head" — was witnessed, but the
794 account of the ceremony given here, obtained independently
from several persons, represents an adequate exposition of the
rite as performed in Mirebalais. A room is prepared where the
person whose *loa* is to be baptized must remain for three days.
The mat or bed on which the neophyte rests is covered with
fresh sheets and pillow-cases, and three changes of clothing
are made ready, one of which must be entirely new for the
last day of the ceremony. These are in the color of the god
[822] being "baptized"; that is, if the *loa* were revealed to be such
a one as Damballa, Aida Wedo, or Gran' Erzilie, everything
would be white, but if it were Gran' Siligbo, the colors would
be blue and white; if Ogun, everything would be red; if Ossange, blue; where the god is one of the Pétro suite, such as
'Ti Kita or Bosu, everything would be black.*

During the three days' "retreat" the one whose *loa* is being
consecrated lies alone. All day long the men and women of the
family sit in the next room or outside the house, singing and
praying, though at night they sleep, since "this is not a wake."
[533] They not only sing the songs sacred to the *loa* being baptized,
but also the canticles of the Virgin, while prayers of the
Church are recited under the leadership of the *prêt' savanne,*
the "bush-priest" whose ability to read the prayers makes him
an essential figure in all *vodun* rites. They may from time to
time have "a little procession" about the room where the
novitiate lies, when small banners in the color of the god are
[782] carried. Soft drinks and a *mangé sec* — a "dry" offering —
are given the god, and white tapers and an oil lamp are

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* A detailed listing of the names, attributes, and powers of the more widely worshipped *loa*, the colors, days, and trees or other places sacred to them, and the "squads" into which they are conceived to be formed, will be found in an appendix at the end of this book.

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lighted. Chicken and rice may also be cooked for any god except Gede, while chocolate and rice with milk are favored, [782] since it is said " the *loa* love desserts " — a commentary on the very immediate and human character of these spirits.

The actual baptism, or " washing of the head," is performed [793] on the third day of the ceremony by a *vodun* priest or priestess who is a member of the family, [596] though any member who has important *loa* and the necessary *connaissance* may officiate if the membership of the family includes no priest. As at any baptism, there must be a godfather and godmother, [608] and preference is given those who are the parents of twins or are themselves twins. The officiant must be possessed at the [787] time, since, it is said, " one *loa* baptizes another." Leaves of [824] the basilique tree are steeped in perfumed cold water, and the hands of the one who baptizes are first immersed in the liquid; [533] then, while songs of the *loa* and canticles of the Virgin are sung, he washes the head of the person to be baptized. Possession [787] occurs immediately, and the new devotee lies back, half conscious, while all others kneel, seeking word from the *loa* to learn if it is satisfied. If an affirmative answer is given, all retire, the person possessed remaining in the room to sleep through the night. A " ball," but not a *vodun* dance, may [529] celebrate the event either the next day or later, but this is not obligatory, and most often those present, after eating, quietly disperse. The following day the one who has been baptized goes to the family place of worship and greets those who have helped him. Only one further rite is necessary, and this solely when the *loa bossal* is revealed to be a hostile god. Then the *loa*, after having been baptized, is "restrained" by being placed in a jar and buried, so it cannot later emerge and trouble the family of the one to whom it has come.[18]

The ceremony of baptism, in Mirebalais, is in no sense a first step into any *vodun* hierarchy, for, as will be seen, no such hierarchy exists in this valley. One important priest [793] there derives his power from *loa* that have never been bap-

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794 tized at all, but merely respond to an innate ability to control
776 them. To have a baptized *loa,* then, merely means that the
[773] worship of the *loa* is thereafter carried on in regular form.
The worshipper learns how to *marré,* or "tie,"[14] his spirit, so as to enjoy the social aspects of a *vodun* dance without fear
[782] that his *loa* will come unbidden. He gives it small offerings from time to time, and if it becomes insistent, or if his family is being troubled by its gods, he takes full part in the rituals that are staged.[15]

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794 In native idiom, a person when possessed is "mounted" by his god, and thereafter becomes his *ch'wal,* or "horse." A devotee may come under the influence of a number of spirits during a single ceremony or dance, one *loa* succeeding another. The first deity that ever came to a person, however, for him constitutes the chief of his gods — his *mait' tête* — and the leader of any deities which may subsequently possess him.
[764] It is this *loa* alone that is "baptized," and this one alone "taken from his head" at his death; and, as far as he is concerned, all his other gods are under the control of this *mait' tête,* so that any agreement which he may enter into with this principal spirit must be respected by all the others.

Fundamentally, to be possessed by a *loa* means that an individual's spirit is literally dispossessed by that of the god. Personalities undergo radical change in accordance with the nature of the deity,[16] while even the sex of the one possessed is disregarded if it differs from that of the god, so that, for example, a woman "mounted" by Ogun is always addressed as Papa Ogun.[17] One wears the colors of the god and the ornaments he likes, eating and drinking those things he prefers, and otherwise manifesting his peculiar characteristics — rolling on the earth, if possessed by Damballa or chattering incessantly if by Gede.[18]

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794 Not everyone, by any means, is subject to states of possession. If the existence of individual differences in the capacity for religious expression be recognized, it becomes apparent

steps to " feed " his *loa* in order to satisfy it, for it is more im- 787
portant to give offerings to the spirits than to dance for them. 782
He therefore either quietly prepares a sacrifice of cereals and 794
liquor in his own room or sends money home so that his *loa*
may be " fed " at the family habitation, and his absence ex-
plained to it.[21] 794

When *vodun* deities are discussed in Mirebalais, most often 776
two " companies " of them are mentioned, the Rada and the 178
Pétro " squads." In one list of gods that was obtained, the [192]
word *Rada,* derived from the name of the ancient principality [103]
of Allada in Dahomey, called forth the explanation *" qui veut*
dire Dahomey — which is to say, Dahomey," though it should
be made clear that neither the words *Rada* nor *Dahomey* are
any longer recognized in Haiti as place-names, being today
simply qualifying designations of *loa*. There are regional dif- [184]
ferences in the number and ranking of other categories of
gods that hold no important place in Mirebalais. The exist-
ence of these other categories is, of course, well known, and
one person referred to " the seventeen and twenty-one classes
of *loa,"* of which, however, only the following were named:
Rada, Pétro, Dahomey, Guinée, Congo, Nago, Ibo, and Wan-
gol. Of these the Congo and the Ibo gods are well known,
though their worship is chiefly restricted to individual fami-
lies, while the Nago and Dahomey categories, though signifi-
cant from the point of view of indicating African origins, are
most commonly grouped under the term *Rada*. Guinée also
occasionally figures in worship as carried on in individual
families, but this term is more often understood as a general
designation for all *loa* outside the Rada, Nago, Congo, and Ibo
groupings and for certain Pétro gods. Wangol derives from
the geographical entity Angola.

From comparatively early times the impression has been 776
given that certain of these classes of gods perform only good, 794
and others evil. Nothing could be further from the truth than
this attempt to read European concept into Haitian ideology,

● 776 for though some gods are feared far more than others, and
794 some generally regarded with affection, even these latter bring
great harm to a neglectful devotee, while the gods whose
power validates the most malignant magic may, in certain
situations, work for the good of their worshippers. Especially
has there been great confusion in discussions of the so-called
[114] Dom Pédro worship. Whether or not the origin of the term as
given by St. Mery is correct — that it derives from the name
of its founder, a Spanish Negro from Petit-Goâve[22] — the
statements that have been made concerning it are in the main
[782] misleading.[23] Thus, it is not true that the Pétro gods are unqualifiedly
evil and the Rada deities unqualifiedly good; nor
that blood sacrifices are made exclusively at Pétro ceremonies,
while the services for other gods are innocent of such sacrificial
776 offerings. The impression gathered in Mirebalais concerning
794 the Pétro gods is that they are principally, though not exclusively,
769 derived from the process of deification of powerful ancestors,
which in Africa exists in forms that clearly explain the
essential tradition that offers a basis for this custom as found
in Haiti. This is reinforced by statements to the effect that
most of the Pétro "squad" are Créole or native gods as
793 against the Guinée deities in the other groupings. One member
794 of the *vodun* cult, indeed, made the concept of deifying
776 the powerful dead explicit, saying that Pétro was a great and
769 evil *vodun* priest who had died with the *loa* not "taken from
[775] his head." For while a general principle in the cult of the
dead is that in the normal course of events those who die deliver
up their souls to God, making the care for these souls
primarily a concern of the Church, it is recognized that there
are others such as this Dom Pedro who become *loa*. This occurs
[764] when an individual, usually a priest or priestess of the
vodun cult, who during his lifetime was known to possess
great supernatural power, dies without having had his *loa*
[775] "withdrawn from his head." Burdened by these spirits, and
therefore unable to get to God, his soul goes to the bottom of

a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands 793 794
to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured 776
soul and makes of it a "*loa nan canarie*—a *loa* in a 769
jar"—which thereafter acts as a guard for its family. 775

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the 794
loa. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each 776
time they are called, returning when they have, in the native 787
idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses"—that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. Those "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them *nan canarie*, has been performed, when they, like the other *loa*, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the *loa*, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole *loa* from Haiti itself.

Worship of the *loa* is directed by priests of the cult. The 793
terms *papaloi* and *mamaloi* as designations for male and female 776
priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian 184
writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess
a *mambu*.[24] Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*; 791
a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any *vodun* priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits.
He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* 755
by the fact that the *loa* of their own accord are believed to 793
have given "*connaissance*"—the knowledge of healing and 776
helping, to these latter.[25] Not all gods can endow their devotees (791)
with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Damballa, Aizan, Bosu, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Pétro gods it is conferred by Bosu Trois Cornes, Simbi d'leau, Gede, Osange, Maît' Gran' Bois, and Maît' Calfou (Carrefour). Simbi en Deux Eaux and Simbi Proméné both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent protectives against

793 werewolves as well as of the ingredients to concoct healing
776 baths. Certain priests worship and control a large number of
755 deities, as is shown by those which comprise the personal pantheon of a *gangan* from the valley of Mirebalais: Gedenibo, Erzilie Gé Rouge; 'Ti Kita Demembré; Simbi en Deux Eaux; Bumba Trois Îlé; Legba; St. Jacques; Ogun Ferraille, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Ashade; Lemba; Aizan Keleké, Aizan Wedo, Aida Wedo, Damballa Wedo; Baron Samedi, Bosu Trois Cornes; Congo Wangol, Maît' Mapou; Agasu; Agwe, Agweto Woyo; Kadia-Bosu; Sobo Gran'; l'Afrique Guinée. Whatever his ability, the *hungan* can cure only diseases " sent by man " — that is, those caused by magic — and by the *loa*, since against illness sent by God he can do nothing. Gossip
[521] disapprovingly whispers how in more than one instance a *hungan* took advantage of his position and the trust of his clients, falsely to represent himself as able to cure an illness " sent by God " through stating it was due to magic.

793 An important function of the *hungan* or *mambu* is to fore-
787 tell the future, and it is as a diviner that the *vodun* priest or priestess is most often employed. No major rite would be considered by a family unless divination were resorted to, but consultation is made for a far wider range of affairs than those of a purely religious nature, and no proposed undertaking of any importance in the secular field is begun without visiting a diviner to discover whether or not the fates are propitious. When divining, the priest is usually under possession by his gods, but other methods, such as gazing into a crystal or basin of water, may also be employed. Several divining séances were visited, but no description of them need be given here, since a number of accounts, including an especially full one by Parsons, are available.[26]

793 Though a certain hierarchy seems to exist among the *vodun*
189 priests in other districts of Haiti, in Mirebalais the organiza-
[755] tion of the cult is informal to an extreme degree.[27] In the
[789] minds of the cult members, various priests in the same region

CHAPTER IX

VODUN WORSHIP: THE SERVICE

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[787]

THE *loa* make known their desires by means of possessing their devotees and speaking through them, or by divination, and if these desires are not gratified, they will mildly harass the family of their devotees, until, thoroughly angered, they will seek full vengeance for this neglect.[1] Fortunately, the wants of many of the gods are modest, and they are satisfied if a candle is occasionally lighted, some water " thrown away " in the place of worship, and they are kept informed of family happenings. But when the *loa* finally clamor for a sacrifice, the time when it is to be made is deferred until the necessary preparations can be completed, for the attitude of the Haitians toward the gods in such matters, as one explained it, is that " *Mystère c'est 'ti moun, faut les derigé*—The *loa* are like children, and must be told what to do," and " If the *loa* are promised a sacrifice, they must accept the date set by the one who serves them." But when that date arrives, the ceremony must be held or the *loa* will cause their worshippers much trouble. This does not mean that a poor person, or one who has met with reverses, may not plead with his god and count on being permitted to defer the offering if he is unable to provide what is asked.

Simple annual rites are held for the gods in January, each 78
family giving small offerings in its house of worship to its own 776●
deities. These minor ceremonies are not to be confused with
the extended rituals which a family may perform but once in
a decade or a generation. Because of the extensive preparation
and large outlay these entail, such rites are often postponed
from year to year. According to some, this postponement is
sought through an *action de grâce*, based on Church ritual,
while others maintain that it is but necessary on his special
day to appeal to the deity who is troubling the family, give
a small offering — a *mangé sec* — and ask for the desired respite.
This may be done several times, until crop failures, sudden [793]
deaths, and the loss of valuable property begin to afflict the [787]
family, whereupon the family head seeks out a *hungan*, who
by divination determines the supernatural forces that are responsible
for these misfortunes; and when his statement that
the gods have reached the end of their patience is confirmed
independently by several other priests who are consulted, active
preparations for the major rite are finally set in motion.

Any such important ceremony must be held on the ancestral 346
habitation, and centers in the *maison de servitude*, the family 778
house of service for the gods. The house itself, to be differentiated 794
from the *humfort*, or "temple" of the *vodun* priest, 78
may be elaborate or simple in accordance with the status of
family members in the *vodun* cult.[3] At one end of the sacred
house is a platform about two and one half feet high on which [776]
are placed calabash plates for the *loa*, six for the Créole
deities, three for the Mystères Guinée, and a white plate with
a "thunder stone," or Neolithic celt, and a necklace for Damballa.
Not all *cailles mystères* are painted, but some, it is said, [353]
are green "for hope," and some red "for victory," while one [532]
was said to have designs of flowers and snakes painted on the
wall above the platform.[4] These houses usually have two rectangular
rooms, each with a separate entrance and each having
its platform at the narrow end facing the doorway. One of [776]

346 778 776 774 778 the rooms is consecrated to the *loa*, the other to the spirits of twins and the family dead. If the house is a large one with three rooms, the third will be for the Congo *loa*. It was also said that occasionally such places of worship reserve one room for the Rada deities, a second for the Pétro *loa*, and the third for the Congo gods, the dead and twins being worshipped elsewhere. For the Ibo gods, however, it is agreed in Mirebalais that there is never a separate room. But whether the gods are worshipped in a single-room thatched shelter or a more impressive "temple" with a metal roof, none of the major categories of supernatural powers are neglected.

776 78 796 774 In the main, large ceremonies are concerned with the task of restraining, or less often of pacifying, deities that have been molesting a family, and of making content those who have been demonstrating their goodwill toward the group. Such rites must be sharply differentiated from the ordinary *vodun* dance which, coming after the family ritual, forms but a part of this complex, and serves to express joy at the dangers averted and gratitude for the good that the friendly *loa* are to bring. At the ceremony drums may or may not be employed; at *vodun* dances they are indispensable. Possession is induced at the ceremony by the *hungan's* invocations; at the dance by the rhythm of the drums. The ceremony is attended only by members of the family and those who are specially invited; invitations to the *vodun* dance are broadcast over the countryside, and all take part in the social phases of the evening. For the ceremony, sacrifices not alone of cereals and drinks but also of the blood of animals are provided; at the *vodun* dance only minor offerings are given. And while both types of ritual are a part of a single functioning religious system, it is at the first where the most important end is achieved, that of obtaining protection from hostile gods and gaining the favor of those who are friendly.

78 79 The pattern of the ceremony — called a *service loa* — is sufficiently definite to allow a generalized version to be given,

based on the rituals that were observed. In every case at least 78
two major officiants are necessary, the *prêt' savanne* and the 79
hungan, though the role of the latter is the all-important one.
Last-minute preparations are made during the final morning,
but what is needed will have been accumulated over a period
of many months. Tables to hold offerings — sometimes two, 78
sometimes more — are arranged at the sacred places on the 79
family habitation, usually near streams or great trees where 778
the gods reside. Eggs, cereals, drinks, and cornmeal — the [776]
food of the gods — are brought, and the animals to be sacrificed are tethered near by. Early in the afternoon the family,
dressed in white, assemble, while the *vodun* priest with corn- [532]
meal describes on the ground the cabalistic designs called
verver, and he sees to it that all has its proper place on the
altar, whether it be the ever-present crucifix, or the chromolithographs of the saints, or the bottles of "drink" — usually
non-alcoholic — or cereals and flour of various kinds. Consecrated water must be on hand, particularly at the big "altar,"
as the table covered by a canopy to protect the sacred objects
is called.

The first part of the ceremony is an *action de grâce,* which 78
in Mirebalais requires an hour or more, but which is said to 79
last two or three hours in southern Haiti. This ritual, entirely 776
derived from the litany of the Church, must always precede [777]
any *vodun* ceremony of the kind being considered here. Its
purpose is said "to set the *loa* in movement" and to notify
them of the rites that are to come, but psychologically it also
serves to assure the participants that they are not proceeding
to the worship of African gods without having paid friendly
homage to God, the ruler of the universe, and the saints. The [533]
songs and prayers are brought to a close by an *adoration,* when
offerings of money are made by members of the family to pay
the officiant. At this point the songs change to a more African
rhythm, and the *vodun* priest takes active charge.

As darkness falls, on the first day of the rite, he summons the

78 79 776 *loa* troubling the family, or, if it is the second, those which have helped them, to tell whether or not they are willing to receive the sacrificial animals. The omen which indicates their acceptability to the gods is their nibbling at leaves or pecking at grains of corn and other cereals offered them, after which the gods themselves come, possessing their servitors. At midnight or later, as the violence of the possession recedes, the sacrifices are offered. [184] In Mirebalais, at least, the hysteria said to mark the moment "when the blood flows" is not present. The actual killing of the animals, witnessed in numerous instances, is one of the more routine aspects of the ritual.[4]

After the animals have been killed, a long period of quiet ensues while the work of dressing and cooking them takes place, the ceremony beginning anew when this is done. If evil deities are to be banished or "restrained," they are called once more, and the priest may have to battle with those possessed by them, for these gods have no desire to be driven away, or incarcerated where they cannot escape. Most of the food given such gods is placed in large pots and buried in the earth with them, but, with characteristic human perversity, if the sacrifices have been for good *loa*, these are only allowed to have small portions. The ceremony closes with the coming of day.[5]

78 796 794 776 184 This pattern varies in details, and to the Haitian these differences are important. This is shown by the response of a person in whose company two similar rites were observed, to the question whether the second would resemble the first. The answer was decisive. "No, the ceremony will not be the same. In the first one the most important spirit lived in a mango tree; in the second, it is in a bamboo." The Pétro gods receive black or gray-colored animal offerings, the Rada deities white, red, and vari-colored ones. 78 796 794 776 Only Bosu Trois Cornes, Pelicon, and Pelib are given bullocks, the first because he, like this animal, is horned; the second because he is even more dangerous than Bosu; and Pelib because as a water-god he will otherwise take

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cattle and all other animals when the river floods. Rituals in- 796
volving the~~se larger~~ sacrifices, however, are held only on the 774
rarest of occasions, and are thus much less common than 776
the ceremony which, typical of those witnessed, may now be
described.

This *service* was held in a habitation southwest of Mire- 78
balais, across the Tomb[illegible]iver in the foothills of the moun- 79
tains. It was said to be the first ceremony of its kind given by 753
this family, and would not have to be repeated for a genera- 776
tion or more. The immediate cause was the occurrence of numerous illnesses and deaths. When members independently consulted their *hungans* to discover the reason for these misfortunes, they were informed that the family *loa* demanded such a rite. Finally one priest, more powerful than the others, became possessed and described in great detail the type of ceremony that was desired: of how many days' duration, the number and kind of sacrifices, what gods were to be called, which troublesome ones must be "sent away" or "restrained," and those of the friendly *loa* who were to be fed.

The entire ritual was conducted out of doors, and at about 78
half past four in the afternoon of Thursday, 5 July, 1934, when 79
first seen, the *action de grâce* had already begun. It was being 776
chanted by the *prêt' savanne,* a bespectacled, middle-aged 778
man, who read from an old prayerbook, while the *hungan* sat quietly by. The officiant was standing in a cleared space with his back toward a grove of trees, facing the "altar." Opposite was a grassy slope, which was separated from this grove by a brook where the Malt' Source lives who watches over the habitation of the family. A white banner hung high in one of the trees a little behind the altar.

This altar, called the *trône,* was a table covered with a white cloth, spread over a frame to form a canopy sheltering its sides and back. A black cloth was beneath the white covering. Under the table a wooden bowl — a *gamelle* — contained water in which sacred leaves had been steeped; near it was a

788 782 776 778 calabash filled with bananas, millet, rice, beans, egg-plant, and squash. On the table, under the canopy, were a crucifix and holy water, lighted white candles, a lamp of palm oil in a drinking-glass with a floating wick, food—rice cooked in milk, a stew of rice and beans, cooked chicken—and sweetened drinks—*kola,* and orange drinks among the rest, together with small drinking-glasses containing coffee. In addition, roasted and grilled corn, pineapples, fig-bananas, cassava, and sirup could be seen. Fastened to the inside of the canopy were *images,* chromolithographs depicting the saints, there being represented, among others, the Mater Dolorosa (for Erzilie, in honor of those long dead), Our Mother of Perpetual Aid, St. James and St. Anthony. Some thirty feet away, under a palm tree, was another table, for Simbi, without a canopy, on which also stood various cooked and uncooked foods. Still farther away was the "first" table, the most important in the ceremony, for Bosu. It likewise held food and drink; while near it was a large fire, the all-important *boucan* for Legba. The sacrifices, tethered to trees not far from the *trône,* consisted of animals and fowls: one very large black boar, two smaller black pigs, and a black goat, a black turkey, a guinea-hen, two white pigeons, and several chickens, including a black one with ruffled feathers and a number of varicolored ones.

788 779 776 During the Catholic-like ritual the singing, led by the *prêt' savanne,* was desultory. The members of the family, some twenty-five persons, were gathered directly in front of the *trône.* From time to time the leader, holding a lighted candle in his hand, would pour water into a small depression that had been dug directly in front of the altar. All knelt for the prayers, the Pater Noster, the Credo, the Ave Maria, and for 788 771 the long *adoration* and benediction. Throughout this *action de grâce* and much of the rest of the ceremony, two women *hunsi* in white, members of the family, waved red and white banners before the *trône* or later before the table where rit-

uals were being performed. If they failed to wave their ban- 78
ners vigorously or often enough, the one in charge chided 79
them for their lack of zeal, whereupon their movements would
become a kind of dance. During the *adoration* each member
of the family was called upon to give coins or candles, the first
for the *prêt' savanne,* though this was not his entire fee.

With the benediction, the *action de grâce* came to an end, 78
and the solemn, tired voice of the *prêt' savanne* was heard in- 79
toning a hymn, which, in the usual fashion, was repeated by 533
the assembled group until, without interlude, without even
a pause, the interpolations of the chorus gradually changed, so
that the rhythm became African, and, with the transition, the
vodun priest took over the leadership. The *hungan* began by
repeating several times the phrase which throughout the en-
tire ceremony was to punctuate all its climaxes, "*Grâce* [*et*]
misé'corde," and the family murmured it in response. He then 78
ordered each member of the family to address himself to the 79
loa, telling what troubles had befallen him and what favors he 776
desired. An assistant now took six candles from the *trône.*
Proceeding in a counter-clockwise direction, he described a
large circle about that part of the meadow where the cere-
mony was to take place, fixing a candle in the ground at inter-
vals. Four of these were for the four corners of the earth, one
was for Mait' 'Bitation — the deity termed Master of the Hab-
itation — and one for the Mait' Source — the Master of the
Stream. When the members of the family, each holding a
lighted candle, had formed in a line, they were bidden to
place these candles in the earth within the area described by
the six already there, and as they scattered over the sacred
ground, little flickering flames dotted the hillside and the
grassy meadow behind the *trône* in the deepening dusk.

Then all returned to the altar, and the *hungan,* taking the 78
first of three plates made ready for him, began to describe 793
vever. One plate held white cornmeal flour, one was filled 796
with gray ashes, called Guinea flour, and the third contained 632

sented with the leaves on a branch of the sacred tree. All the 78 animals ate, a favorable omen. 79

This ceremony was held during the rainy season, but the usual afternoon rains had held off. At this time, however — about eight o'clock — threatening clouds came up and soon the tropical downpour began. The heavy rain continued for more than an hour and the subsequent drizzle did not end until almost midnight, but this was not permitted to interfere with the proceedings. Now the participants took places before the "first" table, for Bosu, again with their offerings. Inasmuch as Bosu was the deity who had shown the greatest ill will toward the family, those present awaited the decision with heightened tenseness as the goat, frightened by the many people gathered about, hesitated long before he nibbled at the leaves held out to him by the *hungan*. But eventually all the animals ate, meeting this paramount test, and as each partook of the food the *hungan* several times called out "*Grâce mise'corde,*" the family echoing their response with emotion. Now two men who had strong Bosu gods knelt before the table, and the fowls were again and again touched to their heads and passed over their bodies in gestures that described the sign of the cross, in order to induce their gods to come to them.

As the singing became louder and more rhythmical, various [533] members of the family became possessed. The deities who responded to the calls were, in the order of their appearance, [776] Kita, Erzilie, Simbi, Bosu, Damballa, and finally Gede (Papa Gedenibo). The possessions took their characteristic African form, with some of the possessed running about, jumping into the fire for Legba, and stamping on the embers with their bare feet, others reeling with arms waving, still others rolling on the ground, which, as the rain continued, soon became very muddy. Most of those under possession were women, but [776] about nine-thirty one man became possessed by Simbi, and later another by Gede. As the *loa* "came" in ever greater

78 number, exclamations of pleasure were heard that the gods
79 were responding. Outwardly, the ritual seemed completely
776 disorganized, the "*loa*" and the spectators moving, mud-bespattered, tense, from the table for Bosu to that for Simbi, and back, or to the *trône*.

533 The singing went on without interruption to the accom-
539 paniment of the bell and occasional blasts of the whistle.
78 Among the songs heard during this period of possession were:
79
[534]

Bosu li join' qui chose a tè,	Bosu found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Bosu ma'ché,	Bosu goes about,
Li join qui chose a tè',	He found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Un va entrave	You will come to harm
Si ou ramassé li.	If you pick it up.
Va enragé Bosu.	You will anger Bosu.
Simbi en Deux Eaux,	Simbi en Deux Eaux
M'we fè p'ou,	I do for you,
F'e p'moin,	Do for me,
Fi-a, Congo,	Help, O Congo,
Congo Zandor.	Congo Zandor.
Simbi Kita Kita, travaille pour nous,	Simbi Kita Kita, work for us,
Jodi-a pour nous,	Today for us,
Demain pou' zott'.	Tomorrow for others.
Erzilie, o Lemba,	Erzilie, o Lemba,
M'ap' mandé coté Erzilie ye.	I ask, where is Erzilie.
Mangé a'paré.	The food is ready.
Gedenibo, derrière la croix, Gede,	Gedenibo, behind the cross, Gede.

		533
Devant Baron, Gede,	Before Baron, Gede,	539
Derrière la croix, Gede,	Behind the cross, Gede,	78
Jodi-a m'p' nan sang m'we,	Today I am troubled,	79
Gedevi, rhele Gede, ça Gede,	Gedevi, call Gede, this Gede,	
Jodi-a m'pas nan sang moin.	Today I am troubled.	
Balai, rousé, cerclé, quitté.	Cease to sweep, sprinkle, hoe.	
Moin pas nan sang, Baron Samedi.	I am troubled, Baron Samedi.	

Shortly after eleven o'clock the *hungan* intervened to calm 78 those possessed, for the time was at hand to give the sacrifices. 79 Summoning the family to assemble again before the *trône* with the offerings, he commenced a long ritual in which each creature was prepared by being carefully washed and combed, while the boar for Bosu was also fastidiously perfumed and powdered. At the direction of the *hungan*, the fowls were first offered, the killing taking place at a distance of some thirty or forty feet behind the *trône*. The chickens were held with the two wings and the head in the left hand, so that the neck was exposed. The knife was passed twice over the neck to describe a cross, after which each fowl was cleanly and skillfully dispatched. One of the assistants of the *hungan* held a small calabash in which some of the blood of each animal was caught, and another, knife in hand, sang with him that they were offering this *koklo* to the deity for whom it was intended. As the last of the chickens was being killed, the *hungan* left the *trône* and quietly strangled the pigeons for Damballa.

All possessions had ceased, except that of a man "mounted" by Gede and a woman by Simbi. The man particularly at- [776] ● tracted much attention, for Gede is known as a gossip, and so [521] diverting were his revelations of family scandal that all were too absorbed listening to him to show any interest in the sacrifice of The animals.

chicken for cleaning and cooking; the larger animals were 78
given to the men, who carried them some distance behind the 79
trône to dress them. For a time Gede continued to possess the young man, who went about talking nasally, demanding gifts and distributing rum, but all others sat quietly about, talking as they worked.

After the food was cooked, preparations were made for the 78
concluding part of the night's ceremony, when the *loa* who 79
had been troubling the family were to be *renvoyé* (sent away) 776
or *borné* (restrained). Those thus "sent away" and buried were Erzilie Gé Rouge, Bosu Trois Cornes, 'Ti Kita Demembré, and 'Ti Jean Pié Sèche, while Lemba and Simbi djo (Simbi nan d'leau) were "restrained." The head, feet, intestines, heart, liver, kidneys, and some meat of each beast and fowl having been separately prepared, they were placed in proper receptacles, large jars or baskets, each of which also contained a number of needles with broken eyes, and thread. This was to give these undesirable spirits an *occupation*. For the *loa*, when buried, is told that before it may again come to harass the family it must thread the needles, and since it can never insert the thread in an eyeless needle, it can never reappear.

Preparations over, the troublesome *loa* were called to the table for Simbi, and as each entered the head of a devotee, the possessed one fought with the *hungan*, for the *loa*, not wishing to be restrained, offered stubborn resistance. "If the *hungan* had not been masterful, much evil could have happened at this time, because he had to fight three strong *loa*." When they had at last been subdued, the *hungan*, bearing a large wooden cross, walked to a place outside the habitation, where first he made *verver* and then caused a hole to be dug, in which he placed the baskets of food. As he did this he formally announced that this food was for the family's *loa* for whom there was no further need; that having given this food, the family had no further obligation toward them; and they must there-

78 79 77 [778] fore never return to trouble the living. As witness to this, he was now putting the cross in place, " which causes everything that is evil to flee," to remain until it rotted away.

Simbi djo was " restrained " where the *trône* had been;
Lemba under the mango tree near the place of the table for
Bosu. Some of the meat of the pigs was buried in these places
with all other kinds of cooked food, and the gods were told
that they were to repose there for from seven to seventeen
years, after which they would again be fed. A cross of iron was
[778] buried with the cooked meat, and as each jar, both now and
[533] earlier, was put in place, this song was sung:
[539]

Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Icit pas pays ou.	This is not your country.
Ça lan Guinée,	It is Guinée,
Qui pays ou.	That is your country.

78 A violent rain-storm not only made it impossible to reach the place of the ceremony the following day, but also made it necessary for the family to defer all but a few of the more essential rites. The second day's ritual was thereupon put over to Saturday, when according to original intentions the *vodun* dance that had been planned to close this complex of ceremonies was to have occurred, but which in consequence was postponed until some weeks later.

78 79 The ritual of the second day of this *cérémonie* began much earlier than that of the first, for by about one-thirty in the afternoon the *action de grâce* was almost completed. As one approached, a newly dug mound of earth with a cross over it where the troublesome deities had been buried was to be seen just outside the land belonging to the family. The cross was draped with a black cloth, and was itself painted blue and white, while a rosary and a magic *garde* of native twine were suspended from it.

On this afternoon the ritual was performed in two places, a

spot somewhat farther down the stream than the site of the 78
earlier ceremony, and later at the family habitation on the 79
hill. There was one table arranged as a *trône* and under its [778]
canopy, beside the *images*, the candles, and the crucifix, were
white foods such as rice and white beans. Instead of Pétro *loa*, [776]
this time the ceremony was to bring Rada gods who were to
be asked for children, good health, and good fortune. The
trône was just below the confluence of two brooks, near
some great palm trees. Near by was a weir, while in the larger
stream, below the point of juncture, were two small natural
pools.

When the *action de grâce*, which did not differ from that [532]
witnessed earlier, was ended, the *hungan* again made his
verver, and these were yet richer in design than on the previous occasion. As he finished he took a number of the women
of the family by the right hand, spinning each in turn several
times to induce possession. The *loa* Damballa Siligwe "came" [776]
almost at once, possessing a woman who threw herself into
the stream, threshing about as a "serpent." No one troubled
himself to attend to her, however, as she emerged and walked
about in her wet clothes behind the *trône* and in front of
it, so that, according to the *hungan*, the *loa* became angry and
would not come, thus making it necessary to sing many more
songs of praise and entreaty. As he sang, the *hungan* seized [533]
one member of the family after another by the hand, spinning
them about and making them kneel before the *trône* to bring [539]
the *loa*.

Moin dit Gran',	I say, Gran',
Bonjou', Gran',	Good-day, Gran',
Bonjou', bonjou'.	Good-day, good-day.
Enfants, la yo, Gran',	It is their children, Gran',
Qui ap mandé coumen nous ye-e,	Who ask how you are,
Enfants yo	Their children
Qui ap dit bonjou'.	Who say good-day.

796 skin, are played in batteries of three, the largest being called
534 *manman*,[3] the middle the *seconde*, and the smallest the *bula*.[4]
533 To be used in dances, the drums, like the *loa* of the worship-
[778] pers, must be "baptized," as will be seen when an account of
their making and consecration is given in a later chapter. The
iron, or *ogan*, usually consists of the blade of a hoe struck by
a large spike, and the rattle, *açon*, in the form most often en-
countered, is a rounded calabash, containing seeds or pebbles.
The iron and the rattles set the basic, steady beat about which
the complex drum rhythms play. The smallest drum first takes
the time after the iron and the rattles have begun, the notes
being played with an accessory figure by means of two thin
sticks. The medium-sized drum is next heard, while the *man-*
man, ritually the most important of the three, comes in last.
The *seconde* also has two sticks, one short, thick, and straight,
the other a small bow, which gives an added resilience to the
notes of the drums' subsidiary rhythms. In playing the great
drum, the single crooked stick, called a *baguette*, is held in the
right hand, while the left strikes the drumhead with heel or
fingers according to the quality of tone desired. The drum-
stick itself is wielded either against the skin head or against
its wooden side, thus permitting a further variation in tone.
796 When "salutes" to the gods are called for by the drums, it is
● 776 the voice of the *manman* that signals the sweeping circular
533 movements of the dancers, dictating with its beat the dips and
semi-prostrations of this figure in the ritual dancing, called
asagwe. The drum rhythms are always distinctive for each type
of *loa*, and every devotee knows the rhythms which call his
god.

796 The drums and iron are the focus of all activity of the dance,
534 especially since those who are possessed dance facing the
[787] drums, in whose beat is heard the voice of the gods. Hence the
spectators cluster most closely about them, for anything of
significance which happens must happen here. The players of
the rattles — it is but rarely that more than one rattle is not

796 A candle was attached to a peg of each drum, which,
[354] with the lantern that hung near the central post, gave unusually good light. However, as possessions began, the candles
[87] on the drums were extinguished as those possessed fell against them, and no more than one could be kept lighted.

793 With the arrival of the *hungan* at about half past nine, the
776 dancing became even more animated, and Ogun "came" as
539 soon as he took over the *manman* drum, but despite this, the
796 *hungan* continued the ritual invocation to call all the *loa:*

Moin rhelé Papa Legba, St. Jo,	I call Papa Legba, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Damballa papa,	I call Papa Damballa,
Moin rhelé Papa Damballa, St. Jo,	I call Papa Damballa, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Loko Atinsu, St. Jo.	I call Loko Atinsu, St. Joseph.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu,	Life is in the hands of God,
Seigneur, moin rhelé Ogun Ferraille, St. Jo.	Master, I call Ogun Ferraille, St. Joseph.
Moin rhelé Damballa Wedo,	I call Damballa Wedo,
Moin rhelé Aida Wedo, Seigneur.	I call Aida Wedo, Master.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu.	Life is in the hands of God.
Moin rhelé Papa Agasu, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Papa Agasu, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Malt' Ossange,	I call Master Ossange,
Moin rhelé Malt' St. Jean,	I call Master St. John,
Moin rhelé Gran' Siligbo,	I call Gran' Siligbo,
Moin rhelé Agwe Woyo,	I call Agwe Woyo,
Moin rhelé Loa 'Bitation,	I call the *loa* of the habitation,

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[539]

Moin rhelé Aizan,	I call Aizan,
Moin rhelé Sobo, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Sobo, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Papa Gede,	I call Papa Gede,
Moin rhelé toutes mystères.	I call all the gods.

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When he had ended his song a number of the "salutes" were played on the drums, to which all danced backward in circles, ending the figure in bows before the drums, which were rolling out the call. In the course of the evening a large number of gods were summoned, but, as would be expected, only the *loa* of the family came to this ceremony. Possessions were observed for Legba, Damballa, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Galloné, Ogun Ferraille, Gede, and Kadya Bosu. St. John, Ossange, Aizan, Ashadé Bokor, Gran' Bosu, Magie, Jean Pétro, Congo, Guinée, Sobo, Bade, and Agwe Woyo, were the *loa* who refused their summons. Though no deity held the center of the stage for too long a time, the evening was notable because it was marked by an unusually large number of Ogun and Damballa possessions, which seemed constantly to alternate. Damballa being the stronger *loa*, his appearance when Ogun was present necessitated the retirement of the latter; but since the possession of Ogun by one woman was particularly persistent, this god returned again and again. As at a number of dances, the *haut chant* for Ogun Galloné, the French marching-song that salutes the "general," was among the songs heard, when those possessed by the god skipped from one end of the *tonnelle* to the other before the drums.

One particularly striking Damballa possession came on suddenly. As a tall, strong man was seized by the god, he gave a great shout and grasped the beams of the *tonnelle*, disappearing upward through the thatch. For a moment it did not seem that he had climbed on the roof of the *tonnelle*, until a head and arms which appeared between the palm fronds showed he

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many as seven or eight were possessed at once. During the night of this dance the following thirty-one *loa* " came " in the order named:

Ossange Damballa Wedo
Sobo
Bumba
Congo
Si Adaman
Simbi Djo
Agasu Tèmèré
Damballa
Odansil Yewe
Ogun Ferraille
Bosu Trois Cornes
Bosu d'l'eau
Simbi (nan d'l'eau)
Damballa Wedo
Simbi Kita
Papa Loko Dahomey
Ogun Batala
Ogun Batagri
Ogun Balandjo
Ogun Shango
Maît' Ogun
Ogun Ferraille
Ogun Ashadé
Ibo Lélé
Ossange
Agau (Maît' Woyo)
Maît' Aizan
Shango
Damballa
Simbi en Deux Eaux
Bosu

The only deity that was called but failed to respond was Gran' Bra. And it is to be noted that both Rada and Pétro gods " came " in response to the summons, though *loa* of the two categories were not present under the *tonnelle* at the same time. Each person possessed was looked after very carefully, women's ear-rings being taken off so that they would not be lost, the contents of men's pockets being emptied, and knives always being removed from their sheaths. When one man was violently possessed by Papa Loko Dahomey and danced "strongly," attempts were made to wrest from him the walking-stick he carried. They were not successful, however, and all dodged him as he brandished it. The *hungan* host was always present to take the possessed one inside the house which formed one side of the *tonnelle*, to " treat " him.

A number of comments on the possessions by several of the

gods may be made. Si Adaman, known as a *loa* Dominicaine, 787
possessed a woman who, with another possessed by Sobo, came 776
to greet the white visitors and ask for *kola,* a non-alcoholic 796
drink much desired by Rada gods. The woman possessed by Agasu Tèmèré was also at one time or another during this dance "mounted" by ten other *loa.* On one occasion, when possessed by this Rada deity, she went to the *barrière* because under the *tonnelle* they were dancing for Simbi — "who is not of my family." Asking another dancer to whom Sobo had come to accompany her, she sang "Saddle and bridle my mount for me," and "Sobo goes with Agasu; he stays in my house." Historically this is significant, since Agasu is the deified ancestor of the royal Dahomean sib, and Sobo the Dahomean god of thunder.

Bosu Trois Cornes came violently to a young girl dressed in red. She was taken inside the house against which the *tonnelle* had been erected, and while a number of men held her, the *hungan* worked over her. She was in a dangerous state, for 'Ti Kita Demembré, who is much feared, often goes with Bosu, and in this instance of what was said to be a first possession was believed to be "not far away" because of the rigidity with which the arms of the girl were held, in positions almost to dislocate them. The *hungan* scolded the *loa* — "Be off! You are not wanted here!" After the girl had been brought far enough through her possession to pour water and take a candle before the drums, she was sent home, carefully attended. It was held absolutely essential that there be no delay before baptizing her *loa* and sending away its harmful companions; otherwise, when possession next occurred, she might do harm to herself.

Early in the morning one of the several visiting *hungans* 796
became possessed by Damballa, and, imitating the serpent, 787
climbed through the roof of the *tonnelle.* The priest who was host, after bringing him down, danced with him, carrying his guest, still possessed, about the dancing-space on his back as

CHAPTER XI

THE CULT OF TWINS AND OF THE DEAD

SHARING powers and prerogatives with the *loa* in the supernatural world are the souls of the dead, the spirits of twins, and, in a specialized sense, magic, all working parts of a universe the ultimate force in which is God, who is sometimes spoken of as its Gran' Mait'. Their relative importance, however, is not easy to determine; and much less the manner in which the supernatural personalities in these divisions are linked with one another. Therefore, when such problems are presented to a group of Haitians, as whether or not the dead become *loa*, or the spirits of twins are related to those of the dead, or whether twins are the equivalent of the *loa*, or what the role of all these in magic may be, different opinions will always be heard. 776 769 845 184 [771]

One of these matters was explained by an elderly *hunsi* as follows: "*Marassa gagné morts longtemps, li deviennent loa* — Twins who have been dead a long time become *loa*," and "*Gagné gran' moun morts longtemps, deviennent loa* — There are those long dead who become *loa*," and she added: "But how this happens, I do not know." Despite a flat contradiction of this opinion by a man who was present, and a heated discussion between them, she persisted in maintaining the

776 correctness of her view, while making an honest avowal of her
769 inability to explain how this came about. On another occasion
845 discussion turned upon the manner in which the powers of
184 these supernatural beings are conceived in various parts of
Haiti. Said one *hungan:* " Twins are stronger than the saints (the *loa*). The *marassa* are the mothers of the saints. So it is said at Arcahaie." The reply came: " In Mirebalais they say the saints are stronger."

During a lively discussion of the point by a group of active voduists the suggestion was made by one that the relative power of the *loa*, the dead, and the twins might be determined if the numerical strength of the following of each cult could be roughly ascertained. Since all give sacrifices for the dead — even strict Church members — and all who worship the *loa* give for the *loa* and the dead, while only some of this latter group give for the *loa*, the twins, and the dead, the person who had suggested this line of inquiry concluded that the dead were therefore strongest, because no one dared ignore them. Still another opinion, though in agreement with this, was based rather on the fact that the *loa* always exhibit fear before manifestations of death, as at dances where persons possessed by Damballa or Aida Wedo avoid those possessed by Gede, since he stands so close to the dead. However, it was pointed out by others in Mirebalais that the most costly and elaborate offerings are for the *loa*, that those for the dead are smaller, and those given the twins are least impressive, which was evidence enough for them that the *loa* are the most powerful of these three categories. All agreed, however, in ascribing to the twins the least power of the three, though what the *marassa* do for good or evil they do with intensity and dispatch.

184 There is ample justification, on both theological and his-
776 torical grounds, for placing twins and the dead in a single
769 general category. For, as one educated Haitian put it in point-
845 ing out that both twins and dead are worshipped on the same
day, "*Marassa et morts font une chapitre pour nous* — The
Twins and The dead make a single chapter for us."

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twins and the dead make a single chapter for us." This point 171
of view is supported by a study of the twin cult as found in that 174
part of West Africa from which so much of Haitian culture 776
came, where a single category of the supernatural world, com- 769
prising all ancestors, includes both twins and the dead, as 845
well as all others " who have passed through the womb of a
woman." As might be expected, the concept is more elaborated in West Africa than in Haiti; but the important point is that in Haiti, though less explicitly formulated, it has persisted.

To worship twins it is not necessary either for a family to 845
number them among its members of this generation, or to 769
have included them within the memory of those living, for it is sufficient if a tradition exists that twins had once been born to some member of the family. If the twins are alive or lived in recent times, sacrifices are given both at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Some families, indeed, worship twins because a *hungan* has divined that their unknown ancestors in " Guinée " had included them. There are still others who decide to worship the *marassa* without the advice of a diviner, because certain benefits are believed to come to those who worship twins, because of their power for good or evil.[1]

The source of this power is vague; one characteristic an- 845
swer to a question concerning it was: " Their power comes
from God. Do we ourselves know how twins are made? " It [776]
is agreed, however, that St. Nicholas is their spiritual father [773]
—an opinion based on the tale of this saint, held to have been a sorcerer who, in very early times, killed three *marassa* (the twins themselves and the *dosu*, or child after twins) and salted them away in a barrel. The mother of the children came to him to offer up her prayers, and, touched by her sorrow, he resuscitated them, since when he has been their " father." The power of twins, whatever its source, is very real to the Hai-
tians. They are believed to be able to predict rain, for ex- [787]

Preferably, these cult objects are made of pottery, joined by 845
a ligature in twos or threes, as required. The plates rest in a 778
box or on a small table which stands in a corner of an inner room of the house. If the family worshipping the twins is a poor one, joined calabashes or wooden plates are acceptable, and such are found more often in the valley of Mirebalais than pottery plates. The "altar" made by the plates is completed by an *image* — a chromolithograph — of the twin [776] ●
saints, Comas and Damien, placed on the wall above them.

The principal rite of the twin cult is the *mangé marassa.* 845
A minor ceremony, if the family has living twins or twins 769
recently dead, it is held, as has already been said, at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Yams and salt fish are separately cooked, and a dish of beans mixed with olive oil is provided. In the morning this food is taken to a closed room, where it is deposited both in the *marassa* plates and in ordinary containers placed for those who attend the rite. As the offering is made, songs such as the following are 845 769
sung: 533

Marassa, m'a pé mandé,	Spirit of twins, I ask, 539
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Adoré nan pié Damballa,	Worship at the tree of Damballa,
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Marassa bra,	Twins of the forest,
Marassa carrefour,	Twins of the crossroad,
M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wè la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Adoré nan pié humfort,	Worship at the *humfort,*
Assuré-e, ago!	Care for us, *ago!*
Marassa dé, trois, quatre,	Twins two, three, four,

The family then take the other con-
tainer to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who significantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table. 769 [782]

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest — " a real one," not a *prêt' savanne* — to chant a *libera* at the grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though " not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique,* the *banda,* the *calebasse,* and the *zesse* are danced.[8] [793] [765] [535]

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no " last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by lightning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explanation could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied. 766 [171] [762]

If the dead person was a *vodun* priest or otherwise had strong *connaissance,* steps are taken before his death to " remove the *loa* from his head " so that his soul will not go under the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm 764 766 776 775

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766 if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is
● 776 not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar.
775 The *hungan* who performs the rite of removing these *loa* is
764 preferably himself a member of the family and is usually left
766 alone with one or two assistants and an elderly relative of the
776 dead, but if the family includes no *hungan,* the one who is
793 called, even though greatly trusted, is most carefully watched,
because a strange priest might take for himself the valued gods
of the dead, leaving only the weak ones. The *hungan* stands
in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the
hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, with which the *loa*
is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family,
nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present,
the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be " given "
to a successor.

766 No special purification is needed for a house where death
[764] has occurred except when the deceased was tubercular or a
[783] leper, when everything except his money is buried or thrown
in some unfrequented place. The body of one who has died
of smallpox, though washed, is buried as soon after death as
possible without being enclosed in a coffin. Those who die
of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment
for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but
in special sections of the graveyard, the lepers and victims of
smallpox being separated from the others, for the Church declares
these have died of the plague. One who drowns is buried
at the riverside where his body is recovered, though if the
corpse is not too badly decomposed, the authorities give permission,
and the family of the dead can afford the expense of
transportation, the body may be brought home. Children are
[561] buried in the cemetery, but, on the principle that " the young
[771] must serve their elders," the funeral of a child is attended only
by those relations who are younger than the dead; for in Haiti,
as in Africa, it is not held seemly that the young should be
followed to the grave by their elders. At the house, however,

CHAPTER XII

MAGIC, GOOD AND BAD

In opening any discussion of Haitian magic, the fact must be 789
stressed that magic, though but one of the forces active in the 771
universe, is a system in itself. As such, it is a thing apart from 794
the *vodun* cult, a point which must also be emphasized, for
although most writers draw a perfunctory distinction between
magic and *vodun*, this distinction, once stated, is too often
promptly lost sight of.[1] At the same time, the differences be- 789
tween the worship of the *loa* and the practice of magic must 772
not be so juxtaposed as to name the second as the antibody of 771
the first. For, though some of the *loa* can work harm, and some
of them, indeed, are primary forces behind the working of
evil rather than beneficial magic, the good and bad they do is
general in nature. Magic, on the other hand, whether good or 832
bad, always operates in very specific instances: to cause a given
woman to love a given man, or to make a certain field of a
certain enemy yield poorly.

Yet these distinctions, when drawn, are found in practice to be neither as sharp nor as consistent as the foregoing statements might imply, especially since the system of magic is empowered and validated by many of the *loa*, as well as being closely affiliated with the cult of the dead. The phenomenon dealt with here, and its not illogical contradictions, arise, however, from the fact that the realistic African world view has by

771 776 789 no means given way to that separation of the categories of
good and evil that governs much of European thinking. A *loa*
that helps a man when friendly toward him may, if slighted or
vexed, set about to do him harm, or, at best, merely remain
passive when danger is to be averted. For the *loa*, like human
beings, are creatures of mood and may take umbrage at some
act which had created no displeasure before. Similarly, not all
uses of magic are necessarily reprehensible, something at once
evident when it is pointed out that much of Haitian folk-
medicine derives its psychic force from its magical basis. In
short, Haitian belief, of which magic forms a part, does not
allow a world view drawn only in blacks and whites. All tones
of gray are found, and these merge one into another almost im-
perceptibly, as the fortunes of a man wax and wane during his
lifetime.

771 789 That the Haitian envisages his universe in terms other than
those of warring and changeless powers of good and evil
should not be taken for a moment to mean that he fails to
draw a clear distinction between the benevolent and malevo-
lent forces behind the magic employed in specific instances.
This realization is reflected in the terminology he gives the
charms that are the outer symbols of these supernatural pow-
ers, the *garde*, *arrêt*, and *drogue* protecting him against harm,
the *wanga* being the carrier of dark magic, and the antisocial
[779] agent. The actuating forces behind these charms come from
all important members of all groups of *loa*, to say nothing of
God and the saints of the Church; but the charm itself is a
thing which results from the control of these by man himself:
"*Wanga, moun qui fait ça* — It is men who make *wangas*."

789 One other point may here be clarified, since it has made for
confusion: namely, the fact that when the Haitian employs the
term *magie* he does not mean what the European signifies
when using the word "magic." To the student, the vast body
of Haitian magico-medical practices, prescribed and adminis-
tered by both those who know how to manipulate the super-

789 from its ill effects after the evil has been exorcised, must also know the forces they are combating if they are to achieve any 789 measure of success. By the same token, practitioners of black 791 magic must know what steps may be taken to counteract their 793 wangas so that, if necessary, they can in turn call forth super- 754 natural emissaries to strengthen the evil impulses originally 756 set in motion. In this sense, therefore, the *hungan*, the *gangan*, the *bocor*, and the *caplata* employ essentially the same techniques and operate with the same forces, the difference between them being one of degree rather than of kind. "*Hungan, c'est magazin. Gaigné un pile marchandise* — The *hungan* is like a shop. He has a lot of merchandise," says the [538] Haitian, quoting a well-known proverb as he makes the point.

In the main, it can be said that though the *hungan* and the *gangan* practice magic, their main preoccupation is with the *loa* — the maladies they send to affect a man and his possessions — while the *bocor* is concerned almost exclusively with setting in motion the agents that actuate black magic, and the 789 *caplata* dabbles in anything that is wanted. One important 776 means whereby the sorcerer obtains his powers is the evil *loa*, 791 but there is this essential difference between them: the gods 793 of the *hungan* are family gods who come to him through the 754 natural course of inheritance, endowing him with the *connaissance* 756 that gives him his control over the supernatural world, 425 while the *bocor* buys his gods. And when a god is bought, it is always acquired so as to enhance the position of its owner at all costs, despite the knowledge that the power thus purchased is dearly bought, bringing its own eventual punishment. Sometimes an ambitious *hungan* adds to his familial *loa* other "purchased" gods, but this is resented by the deities who have given him his powers, so that in time these benevolent powers take all means to humble and crush him. Furthermore, gods acquired in this way pass on to unwilling members of their owner's family and, after a generation or two of mischief- 006 making, must be "restrained" or "banished." A number of

558 793 685 given him by a third party for whom he had done what was euphemistically called "a piece of work." The evidence clearly showed that the animal, which he had killed to feed a *combite*, had been stolen, and since this *gangan* could not establish his defense that he was an innocent receiver of stolen goods, he was convicted and sentenced to three months in prison, and to pay the owner of the pig the exorbitant sum — sixty-five gourdes — asked as damages. Sympathy was very generally with the *gangan*, but the opinion most often heard expressed was that his power had obviously been lessened by his misuse of the *connaissance* the gods had given him, or they would not have permitted even his arrest, much less his conviction. To reinforce the point, specific reference was repeatedly made to the *hungan* most popular in the valley at the time, about whom it was said that, for example, were he accused before a court, the officers might even enter his house in search of him while he was present, but they would still be unable to see that he was before them.

793 435 554 Other attitudes held toward workers of magic developed in connection with this case. The popular *hungan* was often called on, it was said, because his work was well done and his fees were not too high; it was pointed out that there were renowned *vodun* priests who charged five hundred gourdes for a *service* which this man directed effectively for but little over one hundred; moreover, such men often failed to remove the evil deities which were troubling the family that employed them, but would instead add more, so that their clients would soon have need of them again. 793 435 776 784 Practices such as these, especially that of overcharging, are frowned upon by the *loa*, and if persisted in they "spoil" the power of the priest. This was one of the reasons why, in the opinion of many individuals, the *gangan* in question had been convicted. "He was once a remarkable *gangan*, but he has spoiled his *loa* by using them for evil, and by asking too much money for what he was employed

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to do. The *loa* would come, but they wouldn't give him the same *connaissance*."

One of the most important of the forces behind all magic is the *Mait' Carrefour*, the Master of the Crossroads. The possible identity of this *loa* with Legba, who guards the entrance to houses and is also thought of as a guardian of the highways, was a question that could not be satisfactorily resolved, though it seems most likely that the two are quite distinct, since Legba is but rarely called upon when magic is being performed. One Haitian versed in magic stated: 789 776

> "The *Mait' Carrefour* is like the president. Legba is like a minister. God sent the *Mait' Carrefour*. He commands Baron Samedi. Before going to the cemetery to perform [black] magic you must pass the crossroads, and therefore he is able to restrain you if he is not properly worshipped. He commands Damballa. He commands the Rada and Pétro gods. He commands all the saints because all of these must pass the crossroads. Therefore when one has a *garde carrefour*, a person will die a death sent by God [that is, a natural death] and not one caused by *magic* or the *mystères*."

The *Mait' Carrefour* must be "paid" each year on All Saints' Day, when seven cents in copper coins are given and a white chicken is killed, cooked, and placed in a wooden container with rice, biscuits, cassava, potatoes, bananas, and other kinds of food, both cooked and uncooked, to be deposited at a crossroad with the statement: "Here is food; thank you for having cared for me. If evil *loa* wish to harm me, *Mait' Carrefour*, restrain them." As this is said, a candle is lighted and an invocation pronounced: 776 782

> *"Au nom de Mait' Carrefou'; au nom de Mait' Grand Bois; au nom de Baron Cimitière! Jodia, premier la* [539]

776 782 [539] *Toussaint, voici un couvert moin porté ba ou. Ou gardé vol' enfant, comme vol' père et vol' mère dans la maison.* — In the name of the Master of the Crossroads; in the name of the Master of the Great Forest; in the name of Baron Cemetery! Today, the first of All Saints' Day, here are offerings I bring you. Guard your child as your father and your mother in the house."

[788] *Clairin* is thrown three times at each fork of the crossroads, and some is also sprinkled in the center and at each corner of the container of food. Three bits of earth are finally lifted from the corners of the crossroads and taken to the home of the worshipper. Here they are put in a plate with *clairin*, which is first lighted and then extinguished, so that the members of the family can anoint themselves with it and receive strength with which to face the new year.

789 821 Good magic has many expressions. Thus there is said to be secret knowledge, transmitted in certain families from generation to generation, of how to control the rains. Those who have control of magic of this sort are to be recognized when they are seen to be completely dry while walking in a downpour. Generally such powers are used to insure a rainless day for a *combite* or *service*, or to cause rain to fall the day after a *combite* has made the field ready for hoeing, or when the proper time for planting is at hand. Eventually, it is said, in response to a temptation too great to be resisted, the possessor [784] of such magic will put it to other, evil ends. Then sooner or later the punishment for this abuse of his knowledge is visited upon him, so that in the end he meets his death by being struck by the avenging lightning.

789 The most powerful type of protective magic is known as a *drogue*. One of the most potent of these — of the type referred to by Léger in commenting on the ox-tail carried by Hyacinthe, or such a one as tradition holds Christophe possessed, which gave him immunity from all but silver bullets — makes

In addition, the maker of the charm brought a candle with 789 him, and, more importantly, earth from the four corners of a crossroad.

All shutters and doors of the house where the ritual was performed were closed and barred so that no passer-by might report the performance to the authorities, inasmuch as the practice of magic in any form is severely punished and the house was in the town itself. This constituted a departure from the usual practice, for in ordinary cases the rite would have been carried out at a crossroad in the countryside, where chances of detection would be slight.

The maker of the charm began by kneading the earth he had taken from a crossroad into the form of a small pear, about the size of a child's fist. Then taking seven plus seven measures of thread, he first burned the ends and then passed the resulting bundle of fourteen strands repeatedly over one of the native beeswax candles, twisting and doubling it so that it made a length of substantial cord. When completed, he put it to one side and made another like it, saying as he did so: [539]

Au nom de St. Garde,	In the name of St. Garde,
Aujourd'hui, Lundi, nous cordé votre garde.	Today, Monday, we twine your *garde.*
Au nom de Mait' Carrefu',	In the name of the Master of the Crossroads,
Au nom de prière garde,	In the name of the prayer of charms,
Au nom Marie Shango,	In the name of Marie Shango,
Au nom de Gran' Malolu,	In the name of Gran' Malolu,
Qui marche accompagné Mait' Calfu'.	Who goes together with the Master of the Crossroads.

The purpose of this invocation was to summon both the Master of the Crossroads and his wife, Malolu, and the name of [776)

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[776]

the *loa* was pronounced as the cord was actually finished. *Clairin* was then poured in three places on the threshold and drunk by all present.

Seated on a mat, the dealer in magic next placed the molded earth near by and put a dish of cassava bread, cake, and corn and a bottle of *kola* beside it, with the seven coppers and the red cotton, while he placed a candle on an empty white plate and lighted it. From his pocket he took a thick white candle of his own, and a razor, with which he cut it into three pieces. He then removed his shoes. After two pieces of the candle had been placed upright against the plate, the red cloth was torn in half and one portion of it, folded once, was laid on the white plate, the molded earth being set down in the center of this piece of cloth with the thread near by, as the officiant intoned:

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Au nom Dieu de Tè'	In the name of the God of the Earth,
Au nom Dieu dit Fils,	In the name of God called the Son,
Au nom Dieu du Cièl,	In the name of God of the Sky,
Au nom de Ste. Vierge,	In the name of the Holy Virgin,
Au nom de St. Louis,	In the name of St. Louis,*
Au nom de Vierge de Ca'mel,	In the name of the Virgin of Carmel,
Voici poin' garde	Here is a *point garde*
Qui pr' allé marré ce soir, Lundi.	Which I am tying this evening, Monday.

He thereupon poured *clairin* on the four corners of the cloth and on the earth, "since the soul of Mait' Carrefour is in the earth."

Taking up the red cloth with the earth in it, he tied it with

[776]

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* The patron saint of Mirebalais.

789 177 esoteric African survivals they have been blinded to the European elements.[5] It was, as a matter of fact, well-nigh impossible to discuss magic, whether good or evil, with a native for any length of time without hearing the names of three pamphlets published in Paris, *Le Grand Albert*, *Le Petit Albert*, and *La Poule Noire*. So portentous do the folk of Mirebalais hold the information contained in these works — though actually, when read, their contents are found to include nothing more dangerous than names of the proper roots and herbs with which to concoct a love-potion, or, far more frequently, magic for preventing wine from turning to vinegar, or for enabling one to gentle a wild colt — that their importation into Haiti is said to be prohibited by law, a statement which was not checked except in so far as inquiries for the pamphlets in Port-au-Prince bookstores proved in vain. The contents of these works on magic differ but little from those of a document written in Créole, said by Seabrook, who reprinted it, to have come from the files of the Marine Corps, where it was deposited after having been taken during the rebellion of 1918–20 from the body of a fallen Caco chief known to have been a *bocor*.[6] The source of inspiration of a large number of these formulas and of many of their objectives is obviously in such European pamphlets.[7]

789 754 Turning now from the more passive, protective, and socially desirable forms of magic, a similar analysis may be made of its aggressive, destructive, and antisocial manifestations. That magic of this latter sort is much feared is a truism; yet that the fear of it goes as far or is as constant as most accounts of its workings state may be marked as gross exaggeration. For just as the practitioner of good magic knows how to bring about evil, so for every force that harms there is a cure, and for every *wanga* there is a *garde*.

754 776 177 The malignant powers in the world of the Haitian are, like other phases of his life, of both European and African derivation. From Europe he has taken the *démon* and the associated

term *loup-garou*, or werewolf. From Africa has come the concept 754
of the *baka*, though this he has merged with that of the 776
démon, and all operate through the power of Lucifer and the 177
Devil, conceived as two separate beings. In addition, as will be
seen, the cult of the dead also contributes to this system, since [775]
the *loa* who rule the cemeteries are indispensable for the practice
of magic, as it bears especially on the concept of *zombi*,
concerning which so much has been made in recent years.

The evil *loups-garous* are women whose real nature is revealed
by their red eyes, though some hold that they have a [826]
black spot in the corner of the eye. Another word less frequently
heard to designate the *loup-garou* is the Dahomean
term *azeto*, employed in Africa for witches and vampires, a
concept which in Haiti has become merged with that of the
werewolf.[8] The *loup-garou*, with her male counterpart, the
démon, is empowered by the *bocor*. As might be expected, she
is greatly feared, and should an old woman suspected of being 789
one of them come to a house, someone will see to it that in an 754
adjoining room two brooms are crossed as the woman's name 776
is pronounced three times, so that if she is actually a *loup-garou*,
she cannot escape.[9] Children in particular carry
counter-charms both against these women and against demons;
one such, for a woman with child, has been mentioned
in an earlier chapter,[10] and the making of another *garde* of this
type has just been described. With a charm of this kind " you
can leave at midnight for Port-au-Prince [instead of waiting
for dawn] and fear nothing. You may meet a band of horned
demons carrying candles in their hands, but they will stand
aside and let you pass."

In Mirebalais, *baka* are usually mentioned when these evil 776
beings are discussed, particularly since it is in connection with 787
them that the term *engagement* is most often heard. An *engagement*, 754
which is more feared than a *wanga*, the word usually
encountered in the literature when evil magic is under
discussion, designates a pledge made by a person, usually to

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"give" a collateral member of his own family to an evil spirit in return for some important gain to himself. The spirit, however, is insatiable, and never rests content with a single victim. Thus it happens that when one member of a family dies and then another, and another, the *hungans* who are consulted declare such an *engagement* to exist. As soon as this is revealed, all other members take steps to safeguard their houses spiritually — perhaps in the manner of those whose *service* was described in an earlier chapter, which, it will be remembered, was motivated by just such a discovery. Unfailingly, however, the *baka* is there at the appointed hour, clamoring for his due, and proceeds to satisfy himself by turning upon the one who has made the *engagement,* killing his own wife and children, and finally himself.

Why, knowing this, do people enter into such compacts? The answer is usually a shrug of the shoulders, or the statement that human beings are at times driven to such desperation that nothing will restrain them. "A man may even pledge half his own life." Often the reason for such a compact is a craving to advance the status of his children, and that is why when a man who has been consistently unfortunate in worldly matters suddenly becomes affluent, gossip of an *engagement* is heard. But such wealth, it is believed, "passes like the wind."

There are several types of *baka.*[11] Some go about "devouring" men — the term *mangé moun,* in Haiti as in Africa, is idiomatic for sending fatal illness or bringing about an accidental death — while others, who stay in the house of their master, go forth only to procure him riches. These latter are jealous spirits and "make their conditions" — which means that they will ultimately destroy the members of their master's family, particularly his children, or, should a man repent of his bargain and dismiss them, they will return to kill him. To bring wealth to their master, they rob others. Some believe that *baka* are *loa* who change into these creatures from time to time, or are animals given power as *baka* by these *loa*. The "squad" of the *baka* includes the following: 776 787 754

'Ti Kita Demembré
'Ti Jean Pié Sèche
Erzilie Gé Rouge
Simbi Proméné
Simbi en Deux Eaux
Simbi 'Troi' Z'ilé

Baka appear as small bearded human-like figures with flaming eyes, or as cattle, horses, asses, goats, bears(?), and dogs. Sheep never become *baka* because the sheep, as represented on the chromolithographs, is the animal of the Virgin and therefore cannot be a creature of evil. The mule also is never a *baka* for reasons given in the myth explaining how it came to be accursed. 776 825

[773]

> One day Jesus came down a path astride a mule. When he came to a crossroads a snake so frightened the mule that he reared on his hind legs, throwing Jesus to the ground. Jesus became angry and cursed him, saying that from that day onward mules would never bear offspring. He also cursed the snake, saying that thereafter it must forever go about on its belly.

Whether because of this or because of its long, alert ears, the mule is favored for night travel, for this animal is held able to sense these creatures of evil and give his rider warning of them. A black cat can become a *baka*, but there are also good black cats that drive away evil spirits. Even if a black cat-*baka* is sent away, nothing happens to its owner.

A *baka* named Babako, sometimes called Bakuba Baka, is believed to live in the *mapou* tree, where he is "fed" in December. "He is the chief of [evil] magic, is magic itself," it is said, and "*C'est baggai diabolique, gros baka*—he is a thing of the Devil, a great *baka*." For this reason the *mapou* tree is greatly feared, and that is why those who "serve" the gods of the *mapou* do it in secret and are dealt with circumspectly. 776 824

754 Some *baka* are believed to be " doubles " of sorcerers who take
776 animal form and roam at night doing evil. Pigs encountered
825 at night are especially dreaded because of this, and those of a
gray color, held to be more potent for evil than those of any
other shade, are sedulously avoided. The tale is told of a man
who, having encountered a gray pig at midnight which passed
between his legs at great speed, was ill for months afterwards.
It is also recounted how several men of uncommon bravery
waited for one such pig and beat it, and how the next morning
an old woman was found on whose bent back wounds inflicted
776 by sticks could be seen. It is because of stories such as this that
it is held important to worship the good *loa*. For if the devotee
of a *loa* meets a *baka* at night, the *loa* comes to his head and the
baka flees in terror. An autobiographical incident was related
to make this point. When a lad, the man who told the tale
joined his playmates in an escapade which had as its aim to
frighten some young women returning home late from a
vodun dance. Draped in white sheets they stationed themselves near a bridge, turning about before lighted candles in
the ground. The young women were possessed by their *loa* the
instant they caught sight of these apparitions, who promptly
fled the scene to avoid capture by those who came running in
reply to the songs and cries emitted by the protecting gods!

776 *Baka* are often employed to guard buried money. " In this
454 country, when you find money buried in jars, it is an affair of
baka. There is never one jar, but always two or three, and you
must call a *hungan* to find out which one you may take and
which you must not touch. Generally the finder is allowed to
take half of the treasure, for if he took all, he would be tormented by the *baka* who had been left as guardian." Such jars,
it is said, are usually found with human bones beside them or
under them, and tradition has it that the slave-owners who are
believed to have been strong in magic customarily killed the
most evil slave on a plantation that his spirit might keep watch
over the jars. If the owner never returned, the spirit of the

slave, as a "sold *baka,*" remained to wreak vengeance upon 776 454
anyone who dared disturb his charge.

The reality of the *baka* to the Haitian was made dramati- 776
cally vivid by an incident involving an old blind and deaf 825
horse. It occurred one night on the principal streets of the town of Mirebalais itself. The horse was first noticed as the sun set, groping his way along, and finally circling the turn of the road. Though people shouted at the animal, he would not give way. As darkness came and doors and windows were barred, the horse blundered into the small veranda of a house inhabited by an elderly woman, her daughter, and her grandchildren. The younger woman cried out with fright when, timidly peering about the side of the house, she saw their visitor, but the older woman, whose age made her fearless in the face of this supernatural danger, opened a window and vigorously attacked the animal with a heavy stick, while he unhurriedly tried to get clear of the blows and finally moved on to the next veranda, and so from house to house down the street. On this night the habitual tranquillity did not settle over the town, and all of the next day and many days thereafter there was quiet talk of the danger that had been abroad, and much speculation of its intended destination.

The *baka* are sometimes confused with the *démons,* as is 754
seen in the fragmentary information that was obtained about 776
the existence of secret societies, so feared by Mirebalais folk 575
because of their reputation for working all kinds of evil that it was with difficulty that even the names of two of them could be learned — the "Bissago," whose members appear at night wearing horns and holding candles, and "Les Cochons sans Poils." The former, termed *démons,* are believed to be able to change into animals when they do their evil work, a feat which would seem to make them *baka.* The societies all meet
in the open country at night, and each has a small drum. They [202
are called together by the beating of one rock against another 171]
in a manner reminiscent of the Zangbeto society of Porto
Novo, Dahomey.

754 776 575 Novo, Dahomey. The members are, of course, not known, but there is always gossip, and occasionally a man, when quarreling, says: "Take care! You don't know who I am. . . ."

776 *Baka, loups-garous,* and *démons* are not the only supernatural beings that a person may encounter from time to time. Though not all are creatures of magic, and not all are evil, all of them are treated with due caution. Such are the "river [793] people" — children with six fingers, who are believed to belong to the Mait' Source, the Master of the Stream, and are destined to become *hungans* — this being an example of the good that may come from such supernatural association — or persons with light hair. Those with light hair are more dangerous, however, since occasionally such folk are taken for a time under the water, the men by female spirits and the women by males. One person in Mirebalais told of a distant cousin who disappeared as she went to the river to draw water. She was mourned as dead, but returned after a year and was welcomed home. As she began to recount her adventures, however, she was struck dumb, and never recovered her speech. Another spoke of his experience as a boy with such a water-spirit, a *Maîtresse d'Eaux.* With a companion, he was walking along the bank of the Tombe River, when a woman was seen sitting on a rock combing her long light-colored hair. The other lad was invited to help her and went nearer, step by step, until, as he almost touched the comb, he turned and ran. Some time later he died.

754 764 775 Another category of spirits, already referred to in discussing the cult of the dead, are *zombi.* To understand their nature, however, the use of magic to bring about death or its simulacre, and the measures taken to guard against this, must be first considered. In the preceding chapter it was observed how *hoholi* seeds are placed in the coffin of one suspected of an "unnatural" death to prevent the sorcerer from reaping the [789] fruits of his deed. A cross of pine-wood, made by the *hungan* and empowered by him to repel evil, is frequently also put

000 754 he is accidentally fed salt. Though the concept has been pre-
775 sented in recent years with unjustifiable sensationalism to the
reading public,[13] it is indisputably a living one. One aspect of
775 it has been responsible for much of the conviction with which
754 positive statements are made of personal knowledge of can-
266 nibalism in Haiti, as has been shown most clearly by Dr.
114 Parsons:

[793] > "A *ganga* who keeps a *zombi* may transform him into a stone, perhaps in front of his house, or into any kind of animal. Transforming him into a pig or sheep or cow, he may kill him and sell him in the market. In this belief we have the basis of the gossip and court testimony about human flesh sold in the market. It is *zombi* flesh, not human flesh, that is so disposed of. But foreigners know nothing about *zombi*, nor do the native witnesses explain in court what they have in mind when they are testifying to purchases of meat from the cemetery. 'People does *eat* people at Aux Cayes, I *know* it,' said Sam, as he told of human fingernails found on pigs' feet, explaining *to my question* that the pig had been a *zombi*. Had I not followed up his first statement and learned that he had never heard of anybody killed directly for marketing, an idea which amazed him at that, I would certainly have been left with an impression of cannibalism totally misleading."[14]

775 Precisely the same concept exists in Mirebalais as in Jacmel, where the foregoing material was collected, except that in its elaboration it underscores the point made in the quotation just given. *Zombi* meat can be recognized by the fact that it rapidly spoils, and when cooked, brings much white foam to the top of the stew, while such meat, sold as beef, turns white like veal; all this warns against eating it, and shows the active
[776] distaste with which it is regarded. Indeed, one of the duties of a person's *loa* is said to be that of warning him when he is

about to eat such food, for he feels a shudder pass through his 775
body, and his arm becomes heavy, as was the case with a [776]
woman who three times dropped a piece of "beef" she was about to place in her mouth, before she realized the warning.

It can readily be seen how varied are the manifestations of 754
evil magic. What are the forces behind them? What gives them 771
power? What makes their unsavory ends possible of attainment? 776
Their power comes from God, for, according to belief, everything comes from God, in the sense that God made the world as it exists. Therefore all beings are free to do anything they can contrive to do, though once dead they are called to account for their deeds. "Good and evil are two brothers; life and death are two brothers. All four come from God. They do not come from the *loa*."

But more immediately this power comes in great measure 754
from the dead. Before a *bocor* makes a *wanga*, he asks permission 776
of God, the Devil, Maît' Carrefour, Maît' Cimitière, [791]
Maît' Gran Bra, and Maît' d'l'Eau. Baron Samedi, perhaps the most important figure among those who aid in working black magic, lives in the cemetery. Though he is a *loa* and may possess those who appeal to him to work evil, this role is subordinate to his role as the power behind magic that kills. He controls the souls of those whose end has come as a result of magic, and when he is called at midnight, the sound of the clanking of chains is heard as he comes. He is envisaged as a dwarf. After his approval has been purchased for a projected deed, appeal is then made to Gede, for especially where it is a question of killing, though everything may have been made ready with Baron, Gede must "dig the grave." Herein lies the importance of Gede, for he is the court of last resort, the final power in matters of death.

Gede, however, is just, and even though Baron has marked a victim, Gede can refuse to concur in his decision. "If you do not merit death, Gede will refuse it," say the Haitians. It therefore sometimes comes about that though all preparations have

754 been made to kill through the use of black magic, Gede refuses
776 to "dig the grave," no matter what measures the *bocor*
may take. In such a case the victim may be desperately ill, but
787 will not die. When a *hungan* divines the cause, offerings are
782 made to Gede for having saved him from the *magie* of Baron.
For, in the final analysis, "if Gede is in accord with Baron, death can come, but if the two are not in accord, the man against whom a *wanga* has been sent will only suffer."

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177 European straight chair, and if peasants often sleep on mats laid on the ground in African fashion, this is only because their resources do not permit them the luxury of beds. The
342 accessory field-house is called an *ajupa*, a designation which represents one of the few recognizable contributions of the aboriginal inhabitants of the island to its present-day culture, since, according to Charlevoix,[2] it was first applied to the huts of the buccaneers, called by them *aioupas*, a name taken over from the Spaniards, who themselves had adapted it from the native Indian term.

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177 Clothing is also of European style. The men, who wear shirt and trousers, long ago discarded the West African loincloth and the covering great-cloth worn toga-fashion, while the hats they wear are of course equally of European type. The absence of shoes, though characteristic of Africa, is not necessarily of significance, for shoes are not only an accepted article of dress, but are symbols of worldliness, and when lacking from the costume, indicate only an inability to purchase them. The dress of women is no less European, though only the old women continue the fashions of the days of St. John, who reported that "the females generally keep to a long white chemise, covered over with a blue cotton dress that reaches to their bare feet, and is drawn in around the waist."[3] As in his time, white is favored for days of festivity, and the head-kerchief is also seen, even if it is less omnipresent than in his day. The younger women who count themselves sophisticated scorn the kerchiefs and wear hats, but elderly women wind white kerchiefs about their heads in the West
[793] African manner. The invariable mark of the *mambu*, in addition to her jeweled fingers, is the white kerchief with a very large straw hat worn over it.

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776 One special form of dress that represents a complex merging of European and African secular and religious customs is the *rade de pénitence*. For men this takes the form of a multicolored shirt, for women a dress whose colors are dictated by

the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black 292 crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or 177 children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork-quilt 776 fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts;[4] for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence."

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by 304 scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived 789 from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be 178 discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair-tying 307 have been retained by the women almost unchanged, 178 and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor.

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and 417 African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool 177 employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees [439]

CHAPTER XIV

CATHOLICISM AND VODUN

In considering the origins of Haitian religious belief and rit- 771
ual, those African elements which have been retained in their 776
aboriginal purity may be first presented. The importance of 171
the Dahomean and Nigerian elements in the *vodun* cult are
self-evident when the deities derived from the peoples of these
areas are detailed. It has been stated that the name of one of
the important "companies" of gods, Rada, is a contraction of
the word *Arada,* which is the name of the Dahomean town Al-
lada. This group includes Damballa Wedo, Aida Wedo, Ai-
zan, Legba, Agwe Woyo, Agweto, Sobo, and Sobo-Bade, which
come directly from Dahomey, where they are members of the
heavenly pantheons; and Agasu, Siligbo, and Loko, who are
sacred ancestors of Dahomean relationship groups. The term
Dahomey itself also figures in the name of such *loa* as Erzilie
Freda Dahomey, where Freda with all consistency represents a
corruption of the name of Whydah, a Dahomean seaport. The
Nago, or Yoruban peoples of Nigeria, have a religious system
which parallels that of Dahomey, so that many Rada gods,
such as 'Batala, the Yoruban "great god," or Ogun, the Yoru-
ban deity of war, or Shango, the god of thunder, are of Nago
origin; Badagri, on the other hand, is the name of a Nigerian
town. A prominent *loa* derived from this general area not 776
found to be exclusive to the Rada group is Gedeonsu, or 171
Gede, a Dahomean totem. Of the Pétro group, Wangol (Roi

776 d'Angole) is obviously Angola, while the designations Ibo
171 and Congo speak for themselves. Simbi is a Congo deity, as
are Bumba and Lemba. Finally, in the categories of gods im-
[162] portant in the regions of Haiti other than Mirebalais are the Loa Sénégal, and the Loa Mondong, both of which are names of African tribes mentioned in the early literature as contributing to the Haitian slave population. But all recognition of geographical names as such has disappeared, and they have been transmuted into designations of gods.

192 Outstanding here is the word *vodun* itself, already indicated
199 as Dahomean, where it is a general term for "deity," though in Haiti its use has become more restricted and the symbol for deity has become the word *loa*, or *mystère*. The origin of the designation *loa*, which has been claimed to be a corruption of the French *roi*, is debatable. It is true that in West Africa certain deities are regarded as kings, yet this derivation is not convincing in view of the fact that in the *vodun* cult as found in Haiti at present or as described in earlier sources the *loa* are never generally referred to as kings, something that tends to strengthen statements that have been made to the effect that the word comes from the language of a Congo tribe.[1] The source of the root *hun-*, which figures in the terms *hungan*, *hunsi*, and *humfort*, is clear, for in Dahomey it is a synonym for the word *vodun*. *Hungan* and *hunsi* are even more definitely traceable than *humfort*, since the ending *-gan*, the Dahomean word for chief, designates the priest as the chief of the spirits, and *-si*, "wife," is employed in the sense of "wife of the god" or his devotee, in Africa as in Haiti. The female counterpart of *hungan*, *mambu*, cannot be definitely assigned, but may be of Bantu derivation, and is certainly an African word.

776 Other uncontaminated Africanisms can be discerned in the
171 attitude of the Haitians toward the *loa* and in the ceremonies
178 for them. One of the most characteristic is the inheritance of
424 *loa* in families, a direct survival of the belief which not only
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makes for deification of the family dead, but constitutes the oldest ancestor of a relationship group one of the great gods and thus causes families to give primary allegiance to a restricted number of deities. The most striking aspect of this tradition preserved in Haiti is that all ceremonies must be given by family groups, and at them only members of the family may with propriety become possessed. Possession itself, and the elements which constitute the possession complex — the use of the drums, the rhythms associated with particular gods, the importance of songs in calling the spirits, the mode of worship through specific dances for specific deities — these make up another series of Africanisms. In the dance itself the use of iron to sound basic rhythms for the drums, the outer form and function of the rattle, and the fact that the circle of participants always rotates in a counter-clockwise direction, are equally African. The modes of behavior to be observed as possession comes on and the psychological release that follows it both derive from the same source, as do the beliefs that rituals must be held on the days sacred to the particular god being worshipped.

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Another retention of African tradition is a belief in the importance of sacrifice. It will be remembered that it is held to be more essential to "feed" the gods than to dance for them. This is also the tradition of all peoples of the region from which the slaves were derived, and in a sense reflects the very immediate relationship that obtains between Africans, or Haitians, and their gods. Since in both regions each deity performs the double role of doing good for those who worship it properly and harassing those who neglect it, the importance of giving adequate sacrifices to avert evil is evident. In both Haiti and Africa, however, these may differ with the wealth of the individual giving the offering, with the number of persons who contribute toward the ceremony where offerings are given, or with the seriousness of the situation which the deity is being asked to remedy. That the gods permit such varia-

171 778 782 tion is a further comment both upon the human traits ascribed to them, and upon the realism with which they take cognizance — as only African gods can — of the financial position of their devotees!

171 778 772 778 It is not only in the immediacy of the Haitian gods to their worshippers and in their human qualities, however, that these beings have retained African traits, for in the full reciprocity that must prevail in the relationship between deities and their followers is to be seen a point of view that is entirely non-European. Between man and the gods the rule of *quid pro quo* must always be in operation; and this rule may only be regarded as but another contribution of Africa toward Haitian religious ideology. While this reciprocal giving flavors all aspects of worship whether it be of the *loa,* the dead, or the twins, it takes a yet more prominent, and more familiar place in the field of magic, since here the *engagement* owes much to European belief, though the element of reciprocity is much more emphasized than was ever the case in medieval European diabolism.

178 776 794 The psychological values of the *vodun* cult, especially the general tone found in the feeling toward the terms *Guinée* or *Rada,* perhaps most convincingly show the attitudes that aided in the retention of things recognizably African. For while the [184] Pétro gods are by no means viewed as altogether bad, or are always held unwelcome, the fact that in Mirebalais, as in Haiti generally, the Rada gods are those least feared, most desired, and in connection with whose cult wrongdoing is most rarely present, is of the greatest significance, especially when the related fact is recalled that the Pétro gods are the more powerful in the matter of evil magic, while the Rada deities are said to exert their power to protect their devotees from the dark forces that may be set in motion against them.

178 771 772 In attitudes toward the gods, then, in the names of the gods themselves, in the manner in which they function in the lives of Haitians, and in the importance of the ceremonial con-

nected with them, much of African tradition which has carried over into Haitian religious life has been retained in pure form. Yet the intrusion of Catholic custom into these African patterns—often noted, though generally in passing—also must be studied if the significance of the forms of Haitian folk-religion is to be grasped. That this aspect of *vodun* has received the scant attention it has had is probably to be ascribed to two causes.[1] The first takes the Catholic element for granted, so that even where a particularly dramatic element of Catholic practice is seen in an African setting, such as a crucifix or the portraits of the saints on a *vodun* altar, specific mention is made of this without attempting to dissect its historic or psychological role. The second reason for the comparative disregard of Catholic influence is that for Europeans it is a commonplace. Spirit possession and sacrifices, African song and drum rhythms are more "exciting" than prayers or hymns of the Church. Underlying both these causes is the deep-rooted and unquestioned assumption that, in contact with any non-European culture, the patterns that govern European behavior must prevail. Consequently, is it not in the nature of things that Catholicism should have taken root in the *vodun* cult? Is not rather the matter to be stressed that African traditions should have been retained at all? That the process should actually have been one of amalgamation rather than of dominance is rarely taken into account. Yet to go deeper into the significance of this process in Haitian life is to open far-reaching vistas. 178 771 776 177 771 794

An outstanding sanction taken by the *vodun* cult from Catholicism is that of the baptismal rites. Though ceremonies of consecration are a commonplace in Africa, and the African ritual of washing the head—*lavé tête*, as it is termed—has not been forgotten, in Mirebalais the importance of baptism as a means whereby human beings obtain their place in this world and in the next has been carried over and applied to all matters of ceremonial significance. Thus just as in the lives of 177 771 794 788 778

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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for all uses to which those of their type are put. During their 778
making and after their completion they had been sanctified 788
by rites that vividly illustrate the merging of traditions in [777]
Haitian religion: by means of offerings to the African gods,
and through baptism by the rites of the Church.*

The *action de grâce* is another integral part of *vodun* cere- 796
monialism that is essentially Catholic, since its lengthy service 777
is composed entirely of prayers and hymns of the Church. As 778
has been shown, the *action de grâce,* which precedes a *vodun*
service, takes place before an "altar" which, important both
then and at the later, more African rites, in itself documents
in no small measure the combining of Catholicism and *vodun.*
One, employed at a *service* not described in the earlier chap-
ters, was covered with a red and white checked table-cloth, on
top of which a smaller white cloth was spread.* Pinned to the [533]
canopy and to the front of the table-cloth were various chro- [776]
molithographs of the saints; St. Michael attacking the Devil,
Mater Dolorosa, St. James, the Virgin Mary and Jesus (the
Assumption), and St. Expeditius. In front of the representa-
tion of St. James stood a crucifix with the figure of Jesus, in
accordance with the custom of never omitting to have one of
these at any *vodun* ceremonial. The table bore many offer-
ings; at the back were four bottles of soft drinks, with cups;
while also to be seen were several hard rolls, an ear of corn,
a dish containing eggs, and another holding, among other
things, rice. One of the containers on the table held holy
water, while candles for use both in the *action de grâce* and in
the later *vodun* rituals lay beside this. Thus crucifix, candles,
pictures of the saints, and holy water were combined in this
ceremony with offerings of food and drink to be given the
gods that the ancestors had brought from Africa.* The songs
sung at the voduistic portions of these *services* also reflect [538]
the psychological unity of Catholic and African elements in [539]
vodun worship. One of these declares:

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* This altar is shown in the illustration facing p. 192.

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Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.
Santa Maria,	St. Mary,
Qui sorte nan Guinée.	Who came from Guinea.
Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.

Another for the Virgin of Allada, sung in Leogane, is as follows:

Santa Maria la Madaleine,	St. Mary Magdalene
Prié pou' loa yo.	Pray for their *loa.*
O Allada-e,	O Allada-e,
Sonné une sonne pou' moin,	Ring a bell for me,
Pour m'allé.	So I may go.
M'dit, Allada-o,	I say, Allada-o,
Sonné une sonne	Ring a bell
Pou' les pitites nagé.	For the drowned children.

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Of these elements, the portraits of the saints, or *images,* offer one of the most vivid instances of the mingling of African and European elements in Haitian belief, for they are the outward symbol of the psychological reconciliation that has been effected between the saints of the Church and the African deities. This is nothing peculiar to Haiti alone. In West Africa, wherever Catholicism has obtained something of a foothold, certain pagan deities are regularly identified with saints of the Church, and the same phenomenon is found in Cuba[*] and Brazil.[*] This identification of saints with the *loa,* whether initiated as a ruse against the detection of African worship or emanating from a reasoned analogy, would seem in Haiti, at least, to act as a device to achieve an adjustment between two conflicting systems by emphasizing the resemblance between Catholic saints and African nature deities. The importance of the *images* as symbolizing the reconcilia-

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tion is consequently of the first order, while the presence of 353
these chromolithographs in every Haitian hut and on the 778
altars of *vodun* ceremonies indicates how deeply the accept- 776
ance of this identification has gone. In the house occupied in 177
Mirebalais during this investigation, the following *images* were found on the wall:

Moses — St. Augustine — Our Lady of Mount Carmel

St. Peter the Apostle — St. Michael — St. Clara

Baptism of Christ — Peter and Paul

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the owner of the house, when renting it, stipulated that these *images* were to remain in place, for their power kept the house, its contents and occupants from harm.

No greater concurrence of opinion is had in the designations 776
of saints given to corresponding *loa* than in any other facet of 177
Haitian belief. Those here listed were obtained in two ways: either the equivalents of *loa* were named in the course of discussions with priests and other members of the *vodun* cult, or the *images* themselves were shown to members of the cult, and the names of the corresponding *loa* were recorded. Mater Dolorosa is held by most persons to be Gran' Erzilie, but in one instance this figure was equated with Erzilie Freda Dahomey with the insistent qualification that the two were not the same *loa*. The saint is represented as richly clothed, wearing many rings and necklaces and surrounded by other evidences of great wealth, so that the correspondence arises from the fact that Erzilie is held to be the richest of the *loa*. Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia is related to the *loa* Kpanyol, or the Spanish *loa*, while Notre Dame de Grâce is the water-goddess

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known as La Sirène. St. Anne and St. Philomena are also regarded as water-deities, the first being Adamisil Wedo, the second the *loa* Christalline, a strong evil spirit dwelling in the sea. With one exception, Legba was held the equivalent of St. Anthony; in this other instance his similarity to St. Peter was stressed. St. Peter is held by most persons to be the *loa* St. Pierre, though this again is disputed, *loa* St. Pierre being believed by some to be the spirit who validates the sacred polished stone axes which in Haiti, as in Africa, are called "thunder stones." The identity of St. Andrew was also disputed, some saying he is Simbi, others that he is Azaka Mede, a river god whose name is clearly derived from that of the stream across which, it is believed in Dahomey, all dead must pass. One person identified Aizan with Christ, but this would seem to be a conclusion personal to him.

Of the Ogun *loa*, St. James is conceived as Ogun Ferraille. St. Joseph is identified with Ogun Balandjo, because this *loa* is a healer, and St. Joseph is shown holding a child, his hand upraised in blessing. St. Patrick, on whose *image* serpents appear, is correlated with Damballa Wedo Tokan, or simply the rainbow serpent Damballa Wedo, while Moses, because of the miracle he performed before Pharaoh, is held to be the father of Damballa. St. Expeditius is Agwe, and St. Anthony the Hermit either 'Ti Jean Pétro or Simbi en Deux Eaux. St. Louis, the patron saint of Mirebalais, is a *loa* Wangol, as are two of the kings who figure in the adoration of the Christ-child, Balthazar and Gaspar. The *marassa*, logically enough, are believed the same as the twin saints, Comas and Damien, while the "protector of the *marassa*" is St. Nicholas, because the several children on his *image* are interpreted as *marassa*, *dosu*, and their succeeding siblings.[7]

The Haitian often carries this matter further, either conceiving saints as themselves powerful *loa*, or creating "saints" for himself out of the forces of nature or other powers in the universe. The most outstanding example in the former category is St. John the Baptist, worshipped as *loa* St. Jean Baptiste, who sends the thunder and lightning. The power and irresponsibility which characterize him contrast strangely with the gentle child holding a lamb, shown on the *image*. The connection becomes apparent in the light of African mythology, however, where the ram is the emblem of the god of thunder, while following this same belief lambs are sacrificed to St. Jean Baptiste in Haiti. The following myth is told of him: 776 177 [539]

> On a given day of the year God permits each saint to have control over the universe. St. John the Baptist, however, is so irresponsible, and his rage so violent, that God fears the consequences if he were allowed to exert his power on his day. By plying him with drink the day before, he is therefore made so drunk that when he falls asleep he does not awaken for five days. When he is told his day has already passed, his rage is so terrible that great storms flay the earth, and it is a commonplace in Mirebalais that this day is marked by thunder and lightning storms of almost hurricane proportions. Though he can do some damage, his power is now limited, however, to his own sphere.

In the second category are the forces of nature personified and worshipped as saints. Among those specifically named were St. Soleil (St. Sun), St. la Lune (St. Moon), Sts. Étoiles (St. Stars), and St. la Terre (St. Earth). Even more striking is the concept that the power capable of bringing reverses is to be worshipped, as a copy of an *oraison* to St. Bouleversé which was obtained clearly shows: [821] 776 177 539

> St. Bouleversé, you who have the power to overturn the earth, you are a saint and I am a sinner. I invoke you, and I take you for my patron from today onward. I send you to seek out such-and-such a one; overturn his head,

177 776 534 overturn his memory, overturn his thought, overturn his house, overturn for me my enemies visible and invisible; cause the thunder and the tempest to break them into pieces. And in honor of St. Bouleversé, three Paters and three Ave Marias. . . .[8]

771 179 796 Thus it is seen how Catholicism invades the beliefs and rites of the *vodun* cult. In an analogous fashion *vodun* has not failed to make itself felt in certain festivals of the Church,[9] for while elements of *vodun,* rigidly suppressed inside the Catholic churches, are absent except in so far as they can be carried on surreptitiously, they are nevertheless integral parts of these fêtes in the minds of the folk who make pilgrimages to them. So arresting is the resulting mingling of practices, and so significant for the amalgamation of cultures that has taken place in Haiti, that a detailed discussion will be given of the most prominent instance of this type, the festival in honor of the Virgin of the Palms, which takes place each year on July fifteenth at Ville-Bonheur, or, as it is better known, at Saut d'Eau. The festival of 1926 has been described by Price-Mars; [10] here certain observations made during the fête of 1934 may be given, especially as they have to do with those aspects of the mythology which validate the festival, and as they illustrate the non-Catholic, voduistic phases of the celebration, of importance for the points being considered in this chapter.

778 177 787 [776] [538] Beside the church, Ville-Bonheur has three especially sacred spots, St. John, En bas Palmes, and Saut d'Eau — the falls themselves. At St. John is a large *campêche* tree surrounded by many palms, from beneath which flow streams of water. St. John is said to have appeared here, carrying his scepter as in the chromolithographs, and at that time water began to flow in the sacred springs, and except for one short period has continued ever since as holy water, being used for drinking and bathing, but never for purposes of cooking. The priests

stationed near by did not at first believe in this miracle, until 778
after several appearances of the saint the higher authorities 177
of the Church gave the fête their sanction. Many tales are re- 787
counted of skeptics who, though coming to scoff, became filled with awe when they put foot in the holy place and — significantly for the merging of the two religions — were possessed by *loa* for the first time. A church which has since burned and a small chapel were erected at the site which now is the entrance to the enclosure before the present church. This is the old calvary enlarged, and here the statue of the Virgin, saved when the earlier church burned, is found. Next to this church are the uncompleted walls of the structure which is to be a new and larger church. It is said, however, that this edifice has given much trouble, for each time the walls reach a certain height they fall. The people say: "The Virgin does not like this place," and believe that a simpler church should be built where the old one stood.

The vision of the Virgin at En bas Palmes is believed to 778
have occurred several times, most recently as placed by a lively 173
tradition in the days of the American Marine occupation, 177
when a priest is said to have caused both St. John and En bas 787
Palmes to be closed for several years because, as at present, 776
many who prayed at the church also took occasion to worship their *loa*.

> During the fête, however, the tale goes, the Virgin appeared on a palm tree. The people, on their knees worshipping, sent to the priest to come and pray. He declared it merely superstition, however, and called an American Marine captain stationed at Mirebalais to help him suppress this worship. The captain ordered a Haitian sergeant to shoot the vision, but the Virgin merely moved to another tree; another shot, and she moved again. They cut down the tree, and those who looked on with terror saw the vision slowly ascend to the sky. As the priest

778 turned to leave, word came that his house had burned
776 and nothing in it was saved. Later he suffered a paralytic
173 stroke from which he never recovered. Some say that the
177 American captain became ill and was sent to the States
787 "as a punishment for what he had done." Several days
later the sergeant was found mad, wandering in the woods. Since he had fired under orders, however, his punishment was but temporary, and on being cured he returned to Ville-Bonheur to ask pardon of the Virgin. Today he lives in Mirebalais. When they saw the American ill, the priest paralyzed, the sergeant mad, and the presbytery burned, "public clamor" became so strong that both St. John and En bas Palmes were reopened.[11]

778 In 1932 a cyclone at St. John tore down trees and houses and
731 hurt but did not kill the worshippers who had gathered there.
177 An eyewitness insisted he had seen the enormous whirling
cloud rise from the sacred place. He had no time to reach his house, for with a noise like a cannon-shot the whirlwind came, and an enormous oak tree fell just behind him — "I saw death staring at me." Today he carries two scapularies to the Virgin to protect him.

778 The third sacred spot is at the falls themselves, where the
796 grandeur and beauty of the scene is such as to induce the re-
787 ligious thrill almost unaided, and where great numbers go in
177 the course of their pilgrimage to Ville-Bonheur. There are
[788] two falls, situated at a distance of several miles from the vil-
lage, one for Damballa and one for Aida Wedo, and it is believed that those who bathe in the sacred streams become possessed. It is said that the palms near by are sacred to the Virgin, but others hold that they are for Damballa. Many visit the falls on the day preceding the fête, but the largest throng hurries there immediately after the principal mass, when the greatest number of possessions and the most violent seizures by the *loa* occur. The falls, therefore, in association

000 796 782 776 177 devotees prophesied and healed the sick. Even at the church, however, where all go to offer the prayers that are the central observance of the fête, the many candles placed on the rocks at the entrance are usually for St. Anthony; that same St. Anthony who, it will be recalled, is the *loa* named Legba, the guardian of all entrances.

771 177 It is obvious, from the examples given, that the world view held by the Haitian and the motivations which underlie Haitian life cannot be understood unless both the Catholic and the *vodun* contributions to them are held in mind. But certain further questions bearing upon the effect of these two influences present themselves. What proportion of Haitians hold membership in the Church, and how many are affiliated with the *vodun* sect? What attitudes are manifested toward the Church and its priests as contrasted with their attitude toward the *loa* and their ministrants? How does the Church meet the challenge of *vodun*? And how does the Haitian peasant, in his inner life, reconcile these two conflicting forces?

The impression gained from reading available works on Haiti is that voduists and Catholics constitute two distinct [184] groups. While this may obtain in some parts of the Republic, it is not true either in Mirebalais or in those other portions of Haiti which came under direct though brief observation in the course of this study. All discussions with natives that began with the assumption of the existence of two such separate groups led to confusion, and statements which had seemed evasions were not clarified until the incorrectness of such an assumption became apparent. Thus when it was stated that in all Haiti the Pater Noster was one of the first things taught every child, the question: " Is this not true for Catholic families only? " was met with a vigorous denial that was slowly justified as the realization grew that, if not true for all Haitians, such an assertion was certainly valid for the vast majority of them in Mirebalais and probably elsewhere.[13] The identity of membership in the two groups became apparent from ob-

[P. 308 is blank]

APPENDIX I

THE GODS OF THE VODUN PANTHEON

ONE of the most impressive facts about studies of Haitian 776
peasant belief is the absence of any attempt at systematic treat- 114
ment of the deities of the *vodun* cult, as concerns either their attributes, their functions, or their relationship to one another. Indeed, there are but two exceptions to this statement; Dorsainvil (I, pp. 174–5) has published a list of the names of gods, placing them in categories according to their African derivations, and Parsons (I, *passim*) has made available her notes on the characteristics of the deities of which she was told while working in the island. Otherwise, one reads merely of "the serpent-god Damballa," or of "Papa Ogun," or some other isolated designation. It therefore seemed of capital im- [121]
portance in making this study to obtain both names of deities and as much information concerning these gods as possible, and the resulting data are presented here.

One reason why perhaps not more of such "systematic the- 776
ology" of *vodun* as exists has been made available is the great 184
degree of individual variation which confronts the student 794
seeking this kind of information, since differences of opinion are invariably encountered. Even priests do not by any means [793]
agree, for these men and women are supreme individualists, each being the worshipper of particular deities and exploiting special skills, with the result that the frame of reference within

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(793)

which a given priest operates differs from that of his colleagues — though, of course, always within the limitations set by the general pattern of the cult.

This range of opinion cannot be better illustrated than by giving, at the outset, three of the lists of *vodun* deities that were obtained, since here only so simple a matter is involved as names of gods. These lists, it must be remarked, were given by people living in the same valley; were they to be compared with lists collected from other parts of the island even greater disparities would appear, as will be evident if the collection of names of *loa* given by Dorsainvil is consulted. Certain deities, whose names recur below and are also to be found in Dorsainvil's list and in Parsons' notes would be included in any enumeration of gods of the cult, since their worship prevails throughout Haiti. Such would be Legba, Damballa, Aida Wedo, Aizan, Ogun, Agwe, Loko, Shango, Ossange, Bosu, Simbi, Wangol, Baron Samedi, Gede, and Erzilie. Others, though not enjoying as widespread a following, are worshipped over large areas. A number, however, either are gods that have resulted from the process of deifying the souls of those who, in a given locality, were renowned for their spiritual power, or represent survivals of regional African deities that have been preserved in certain large family groups.

Turning now to the lists themselves, the first of these was obtained from a woman functionary of the cult. A single asterisk after a name indicates that its exact counterpart is found in the second list presented here, while two asterisks show the precise name was included in the third listing.

Rada	*Pétro*
Damballa Wedo**	Pétro
Aizan Damballa**	Bosu Trois Cornes*
Aida Wedo	Bosu Djo
Ogun Galloné	Gedeonsu*
Ogun Ferraille* **	'Ti Kita Demembré*
Ogun Balandjo* **	'Ti Jean pié sèche*

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Ogun Sabaho
Legba Avardra
Mon Loa
Solugui
Azao Comble (*or* Coumbe)
Azao Pemba*
Ashade Bokor
Agasu Wedo
Agasu Djeme
Shango
Nago Shango
Acque Fer
Golimé
Agwe Woyo*
Agwesi (*his son*)
Agweta (*his daughter*)
Kadia Bosu
Sobo
Taureau

Congo Zandor* **
Congo Savanne
Congo Wangol
Congo Guinée
Erzilie Mapiangle*
Erzilie Gé rouge* **
Simbi Prominé*
Simbi troi' zilé*
Simbi Wangol
Simbi en Deux Eaux* **
Simbi Galloné
Bakala Baka (*or* Babako Baka)
Lemba Zahou
Bumba*
Gran' Alouba
Gran' Agersi
Gran' Siligbo**
Maît' d'habitation
Maît' Carrefour** (*called* Louis di' fils)
Mari boben
Nangovi
Nangozên
Pélécon*
Ossange Batagri
Ossange Batala
Maît' Mapou (*called* Garçon Mgampé)
Maît' des Eaux
Clairmé
Mme. Clairmé
Clairmézine
Maît' Baleine (Cong' la Mè')

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The second list was given by a woman prominent in the worship of the *loa;* the deities in the preceding list whose names were also included in this (that is, those that were marked with a single asterisk) are not given here, but a double asterisk indicates, as before, that they are also found in the third list.

Rada

Damballa-Aida-Wedo**
Maît' Damballa
Maît' Aizan
Ogun Batagri**
Général Ogun
Legba grand-chemin
Legba nan barrière
Legba Maît' 'bitation
Maît' Azaou
Maît Ashade
Maît' Bokor
Maît' Agasu
Agweta Woyo
Sobo-Bade
Papa Pierre
Gran' Alouba
Gran' Aguera
Gran' nan Canari (*or* Gosen)
Général Malugué
Lt. Général Jean Baptiste
Gran' Erzilie
Erzilie Freda Dahomey
Maît' Ossange**
Maît' Batala

Pétro

Jean Pétro
Bosu d'l'eaux
Maît' Bosu
Gedenibo**
Gedeou
Maît' Clairmé
Fille Clairmé
Lemba**
Seli-ho

The third list is that given by a minor functionary of the *vodun* cult, known for his ability as a leader of songs. In ad-

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dition to the *loa* marked with doubled asterisks above, the deities he named were:

Rada	*Pétro*
Aizan	Kita
Aizan Marché	Erzilie
Aizan Marché loko	Papa Simbi
Ogun d'l'eaux	Simbi Gran' Bois
Ogun Batala	Simbi Cimitière
Ogun Ashade	Simbi caille moin
Papa Ogun	Simbi Carrefour
Papa Agasu	Simbi Kita
Agasu Tèmèré	Simbi Magie
Siligbo en bas d'l'eaux	Simbi Pétro
Siligbo Vavou	Simbi Macaya
Loko Kisigwé	Gran' Bois
Loko Yai	Baron Samedi
Pa Loko	Gran' Siligbo
Marassa Nundé	
Loa Créole	
Dahomey Freda	

Some of the inconsistencies and individual variations in the naming of the gods as demonstrated in these lists may be specified. Outstanding are the differences found in the manner of naming a single god, as when Général Ogun is called Ogun Galloné or Papa Ogun, or when Aizan Damballa is listed as two *loa*, Maît' Damballa and Maît' Aizan. Lack of agreement, however, is manifested in other ways. Though Taureau is given as a Rada god, during one *vodun* dance for the Rada deities, when a man was possessed by this *loa*, he was quickly led away and brought out of his possession, since Taureau, regarded by the group giving the dance as a Pétro deity, could not properly come to a rite for gods of another "company." Or again, whereas the second list names Maît' Ouange and Maît' Batala as Rada *loa*, the first list places them

776 794 184 in the Pétro group. The Erzilie gods are put in both categories, while Gran' Siligbo, designated in the first list as Pétro, was assigned to both " companies " by the person who gave the third list, and named as a Rada deity by the one who gave the second. Furthermore, the third list, that of the singer, comprises *loa* whose " names " are undoubtedly the result of the acceptance by this man of certain phrases from his songs as valid designations of gods, especially such names as " Aizan Marché Loko " or " Loko Kisigwé." It is not without interest to speculate on this as a possible mechanism by means of which new names are added to the *vodun* pantheon.

Only one of the lists specifically assigned gods to other than the Rada and Pétro categories. One of these was termed *Guinée* and included the following names of deities:

Kaplaou
Enwizo
Wangol
Congo
Loa Sinegal
Cangaron

The other was the Ibo group, accorded two names, the Loa Mondongue and a *loa* named Ibo Lélé.

776 More variable, however, than classifications of the *loa* are accounts of attributes and interrelationships, and details of their worship. Yet certain traits and functions of the gods and aspects of their ritual can be set forth. One way in which [533] the Haitians determine such matters is by reference to the songs sung in honor of the gods. Again and again the texts of such songs were cited as authority, suggesting that they are the " holy word " of *vodun* theology and an important device in stabilizing the details of belief. The attributes of the gods which follow are the result of extended discussions with folk who possessed all degrees of knowledge of the details of the cult and who were all active participants in it.

Legba, guardian of the crossroads, the highway, and the *barrière,* the entrance to every house, yard, or garden, is one of the most important *vodun* deities. He is generally conceived

as a limping old man, clad in tatters, but in his several mani- 776 ●
festations has more specific characteristics. Thus Legba Pié
Cassé is described as having paralyzed legs, with arms held
stiff and crooked before him, and Legba Avardra is spoken
of as a *vagabond* who continually wanders the principal high-
ways. Legba must first be summoned before any ceremony
may begin, and when it was asked how Legba could be ex-
pected to come when called simultaneously to three or four or
twenty or fifty places, the parallel given was that of the multi-
ple manifestations of which God or Christ or a saint is capable.
Legba, identified with St. Anthony, has Tuesday as his sacred
day, and the plum tree is reserved for him. He "eats" a vari- 776
colored type of cock known as *poule zinga*, marked like a 782
guinea-fowl, and in this differs from other gods who must
indicate through a possessed devotee or a diviner what specific
offering among the things they favor is wanted on the occa-
sion of each sacrifice. Though in southern Haiti the smallest [184]
chick from each hatching is reserved for Legba, and at least
once during his lifetime a man puts aside a bullock or a
male goat as a sacrifice for this god, these customs do not pre-
vail in Mirebalais. Here, when an offering to the gods is in
prospect, Legba is included among the *loa* to whom a certain
animal is promised, and, as in the case of other deities, this
animal is thereafter under his protection. But this is the near-
est approach to any special offerings for this god.

Damballa, an important Rada god whose symbol is the ser- 776
pent, is said to bring rain because they sing "*Damballa nan* [821]
l'eau—Damballa in the water." The sacred color of this [822]
deity, worn by devotees under possession, is white, and the
full initiates wear white necklaces as well as white clothing.
This god, identified with St. Patrick, is especially worshipped [782]
on Thursdays, and shares the white fig tree with Erzilie and
Gran' Siligbo. Damballa "eats" sacrifices of white chickens
and pigeons, rice, milk, eggs, pineapples, and fig-bananas;
and "drinks" *kola* and sweetened coffee. Damballa forms the [821]

● 776 [821] rainbow, and this is called an *arc d'alliance* between him and Aida Wedo, his wife, whose characteristic dress is blue and [171] white. Sobo, who in Dahomey is the god of thunder, is also believed in Haiti to give thunder, though he is not thought to live in the sky. As in Africa, his symbol is the ram. Aizan lives in the water, and is a favored deity because he gives his devotees the power of healing and of divining.

Erzilie, a *loa* of considerable importance, is envisaged as a pale, trembling woman who also inhabits the water. She constantly changes her dresses, of which she has many. All agree that she is a fabulously wealthy woman, who wears golden chains about her neck and has many rings, a characterization derived from her identification with Mater Dolorosa, whose chromolithographs depict her with many rich ornaments. As a Rada *loa* she "eats" the same food as Damballa, and wears white, like this other god, but has Friday as her sacred day. In her less pleasant manifestation of Erzilie Gé Rouge, the red-eyed one, she is a member of the Pétro "squad," and is held to be the wife of Simbi d'l'eau, with whom she is believed to get on especially well, since they "eat" different foods. Simbi, who is worshipped on Tuesdays and inhabits the mango and calabash trees, is said to drink heavily, however, and occasionally becomes so boistrous in his cups that he destroys the furniture and otherwise makes himself so objectionable that Erzilie is forced to leave him until he becomes sober.

[171] Ogun, in Haiti as in Nigeria, is the god of war. The Nigerian Shango is also found, though the Haitians conceive Shango as a *loa* who acts as the servant of the Ogun deities, 782 particularly Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala. Ogun "eats" [822] red cocks and red beans mixed with rice, and his color, red, is worn by his devotees. To this fact may be referred the custom [114] of the Caco warriors who fought against the American Ma- [648] rines in 1918–20 to wear red as their distinguishing color, something referred to by Wirkus (pp. 22 ff.), though he

776 [114] [648]

combines an explanation having an element of correctness — "a charm against harm" — with entire misunderstanding when he speaks of the color as symbolizing a "declaration of a holy war against wrong and oppression." Some, but not all of the Ogun *loa* drink Haitian rum. Ogun himself is identified with St. James the Elder, and his sacred day is Wednesday. This *loa* is a *Nèg' défence* and protects his worshippers from bullets or wounds inflicted by weapons. Ogun Balandjo guards travelers, though he is not as strong as such others of the Ogun group as Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala, with whom he shares the bamboo tree as a habitation. The former gives *connaissance* — knowledge — which permits those he possesses to prohesy; the latter endows with the ability to prepare healing baths. The Ogun *loa* Erzilie and Damballa are jealous gods. On the day sacred to each, a devotee puts fresh linen on his bed, places powder, soap, and a comb near by, and sleeps alone. If the devotee is a woman, her husband sleeps elsewhere; if a man, his wife must seek another place; otherwise the transgressor would die.

776 823 [184]

Agwe Woyo is god of the sea, but, as might be expected, neither he nor his son and daughter, Agweto and Agweta Woyo, figures as importantly in Mirebalais as in coastal areas. For the folk of Mirebalais the river-gods, particularly the spirit of the Artibonite River, are of much greater importance. This last-mentioned *loa*, named Clairmé, a Pétro deity like his wife and daughter, Mme. Clairmé and Clairmézine, lives in the deepest part of the stream with the other members of his "family." Similarly, the deepest parts, or *bassins*, of tributary streams hold the spirits of those waters. And since all these tributaries flow into the Artibonite, and the Artibonite empties into the ocean, it is said that when the river is in flood, Clairmé is engaged in inspecting his domain, being greeted by the spirits of all the smaller rivers as he passes their mouths. At this time the flow of the water in each tributary is arrested until he has gone by, when, in a great swirl,

● 776 823 it joins the flooded Artibonite as its master accompanies Clairmé on his way to consult with the great ruler of the sea, Agwe. Actually, at the height of the rainy season the force of the light colored muddy water of the major stream holds back the darker colored flow of its tributaries in a manner which accords with the legend, so that, observing the Tombe River at one such time, the Haitians who were present said: "The Tombe is waiting for its master to pass."

776 Gede, a deity who figures in both the Rada and the Pétro [184] groups as chief functionary under Baron Samedi, ruler of [794] cemeteries, is tolerated rather than favored, though his rewards to his devotees include the refusal to dig a premature [787] grave for them. When Gede possesses a devotee at a dance, Damballa, Ogun, and the other Rada gods "leave" at once, and those who are possessed by them come out of their possessions. For though Gede is no less a *loa* than other gods, "He is a *zombi* and is fed apart"; as the Haitians say: "The *loa* [822] are like human beings. They will not mingle with the dead, and Gede is of the dead." His color is black, and Saturday [782] is his sacred day. He "eats" salt herring, hot peppers, cassava, roasted corn, roasted bananas, and other roasted foods. He [825] drinks *clairin* — much of it — and at great ceremonies a black goat and chickens are killed for him, as well as those chickens with ruffled feathers called *djakati*, which in all the New World, as in Africa, are believed to discover and dig up magic charms set against their owners. He lives in the cemetery, "behind the cross." There are a number of deities whose names are compounded with the name of Gede — Gedenibo, Gedeonsu, Gedehun — and hence the question whether or not this is a generic term or a specific designation is pertinent. There is no agreement on this point, and it could only be established that those *loa* who bear the same name, such as all Ogun or Bosu or Simbi deities, are brothers; but who the parents of these groups may have been is not known.

Associated with Simbi and Gede in the Pétro "squad" are the various forms of Bosu and 'Ti Kita. Some hold that Bosu lives in the mountains and the cemeteries, but not in the water; others state that he does not live in the mountains, but in the water and on the plain. As a matter of fact, there is a Bosu of the water, and there would also seem to be one of the plain, of the crossroads, and of the mountains, each with its own name. 'Ti Kita, conceived as a woman, is also associated with the cult of magic and the dead. She is "fed" a goat, which is almost invariably referred to as Maria Louisa, or Louisa. 776 [782]

000 [771] ← heard in Haiti, but descriptive details of the practice abound." Elsewhere (p. 158) she speaks of "this higglety pigglety pantheon" of *loa*, whose traits "none . . . [were] . . . able to describe . . . at all systematically." [996] → Price-Mars (I), 32, however, mentions the existence of a theology based on African beliefs not unlike that described here.

[9] Cf. Parsons (I), 168.

[10] Nowhere is the confusion with which writers on Haiti have approached and presented *vodun* theological concepts better exemplified than in the passage found in [114] → Craige, 98–9; or 71, where a charm for working evil magic is spoken of as "something having to do with voodoo."

[11] Despite the importance of possession, one would hesitate before accepting in its entirety the somewhat simplistic approach of Dorsainvil that "*le vôdou se ramène à l'idée de la possession,*" (I), 113.

[12] St. Mery, i, 35.

[988] [987] ← [13] Parsons (I), 169, note 2, speaks of baptism, but states "*loi* Pétrou is one you do not baptise, as you do other *loi* when they come . . ." — a custom at variance with Mirebalais procedure.

[14] Cf. Parsons (I), 165, however, where the meaning of *marré* is given "to get the spirit."

[15] See Parsons (I), 164–5, for a description of a "shrine" of a worshipper of the *loa*.

[16] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 115 ff.

[17] This is undoubtedly the explanation of Seabrook's "hermaphroditic god" called Papa Nebo (Gedenibo), which he shows on pp. 9 and 10 of the plates of his book. As is indicated elsewhere in this volume, Gede, who does not partake of this characteristic in the least, has thus been woefully misunderstood by Seabrook.

[18] Dorsainvil (I), 72–4, describes possession at a *vodun* ceremony, and Wirkus, 173 ff., also gives a description of a possession scene, but his account is pitched so hysterically as materially to lessen its usefulness for serious comparisons.

[19] (I) *passim*, but especially 18–19, 58–61, 86–7, 111–12. A definition of *vodun* more acceptable to those who approach social phenomena from an ethnological and historical point of view is to be found on page 130. Price-Mars (I), 123 ff., gives an extended criticism of Dorsainvil's hypothesis, though from quite a different point of

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CHAPTER XI

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 173–4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.

[2] Price-Mars (I), 35, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.

[3] The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (82 ff.).

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 34.

[5] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.

[6] Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89–91, and others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to dissect out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

[7] Cf. Wirkus, 221–3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley. [764] [784] [768] [116]

[8] See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 148–50. [764]

[9] This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

[1] An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 230–1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.

[2] St. Mery, i, 56. The term *garde* is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational *wanga* (*ouanga*) being preferred.

[3] Léger, 55, note 34.

[4] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 171.

[5] No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I), 179, written after a single séance with a *gangan*.

[6] Pp. 324–31.

[7] Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer. [171] [177] [789]

[8] It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Atéman*.

[9] Cf. Parsons (II), 396.

[10] See above, pp. 94–5.

[11] The closest correspondence [124] [776]

000 191 776 to the Haitian *baka* found in the New World are the *bakru* of Dutch Guiana, who in turn derive from the "little folk" of West African belief, beings that are always important in making magic. See Herskovits, M. and F. (IV), 105–7.

[14] Dorsainvil (I), 130, mentions this rite.

[15] Notably by Seabrook, 92 ff., who made great capital of the concept and purported actually to have seen these beings! Parsons (II), ii, 592, Tale 77, I, reproduces a Haitian's account in Créole of how a Sorcerer goes about ensnaring a victim to make of him a *zombi*.

[16] Parsons (I), 178–9.

CHAPTER XIII

184 342 [1] Price-Mars (II), 96 ff., gives a detailed description of the peasant house. The beehive-shaped hut mentioned by Craige, 96, is not found in Mirebalais, though the valley is but a short distance from Hinche, of which he was writing. Scabrook, 18, also describes the interior of a peasant house. 171 538

[2] Charlevoix, ii, 42.

[3] St. John, 153.

114 [4] Seabrook, 104 ff., devotes some space to a discussion of *pénitence*, but so changes its meaning to the Haitians that it is quite useless in making a serious comparison of data.

[5] See the discussion in Dorsainvil (I), 150, concerning other retentions of African motor behavior in Haiti.

[6] Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus, all give lively accounts of cock-fights.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 1–15, for accounts of the manner in which stories are told in Haiti. It is to be noted that the African belief that a tale must not be told during the daytime persists there.

[8] A large collection of Haitian folk-tales has been published recently by Parsons (II), ii, 470–596.

[9] Audain has published what is perhaps the largest collection of Créole proverbs; his work, however, is unfortunately out of print.

CHAPTER XIV

[1] Dorsainvil (I), 158.

[2] Exceptions to this statement must be made in the case of the careful study of the relationship between Catholicism and *vodun* by Price-

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[776]

Mars (I), 163 ff., and to the briefer discussions of this point in Dorsainvil (I), 35–7, and Parsons (I), *passim,* but especially p. 179. Some consideration is also given to this mingling of religious beliefs in Wirkus, 20, 22, 177, 179, and in Seabrook, 17–20, though in this latter citation the distortion of native belief usually found in Seabrook's book is not absent.

[3] Wirkus, 288–9, describes the baptism of Rada drums, though certain details in his account appear somewhat unlikely.

[4] Compare Parsons (I), 165, 175.

[5] Cf. Ortiz, *passim.*

[6] Cf. Ramos, Ch. V; Ignace; Nina-Rodrigues, *passim.*

[7] Price-Mars (I), 180–1, gives the following correspondences between *vodun*-cult deities and saints of the Church:

Legba:	**St. Anthony**
Ogun Balandjo:	**St. James the Elder**
Agomme Tonnerre:	**St. John the Baptist**
Daguy Boleguay:	**St. Joseph**
Roi d'Aoubeau:	**St. Louis (King of France)**
Grande Mambo Batala:	**St. Anne**
Maitresse Erzulie:	**the Holy Virgin (especially the Holy Virgin of the Nativity)**
La Sirène:	**the Assumption**
Pierre D'Ambala:	**St. Peter**

Seabrook, 13, speaks of "Maîtresse Erilée . . . the mild blessed Virgin Mary," and Wirkus, 178–9, correlates Damballa with St. Patrick, and Legba with St. Peter.

[8] The original of the part of this *oraison* given here is reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 309, and quoted in full by Price-Mars (I), 183–4; the latter also gives, 182–3, another of these *oraisons populaires,* to Ste. Radegonde, who is regarded in it as an associate of Baron Samedi in the cemetery. For *oraisons* used in the fetish cult of Cuba, see Ortiz, 90 ff.

[114]

[9] Price-Mars (I), 32, speaks of "*le catholicisme hybride de nos masses populaires,*" as later, 38, he denominates *vodun* as an African religion "*alterée par sa juxtaposition plus que séculaire à la réligion catholique. . . .*" See also p. 122. The points of resemblance between Catholicism and *vodun* which encouraged the resulting synthesis are tellingly numbered on pp. 164–5.

[776]

[P. vii]
[P. vi is blank]

Preface

Every student of Haitian life is soon impressed by the richness of the ma- 121
terials spread out before him and the necessity of limiting his field of in- 184
vestigation. A study of Haitian religious practices, for example, draws one
deeper and deeper into profusion, variation, and contradiction. One finds
little difficulty in drawing a generalized picture with swift, bold lines;
but when he descends into detail he discovers that the broad generaliza-
tions of the religious system contain within them many shifting and even
warring motifs, and that what in one region is held to be true is not so
regarded in another. The gods of *Vodoun* that are revered in one village [776]
are given only perfunctory treatment in another. Rites for the dead have [769]
a common denominator everywhere in the country, but each community
brings to them something of its own or emphasizes traditions that else-
where are forgotten. So it is also with music and dancing. A traditional [533]
drum rhythm may have one name in the north and another in the south, [535]
or a certain rhythm may be called by different names. There are diverse
opinions about which dances are preferred by certain deities. The mean- [533]
ing of a song can be interpreted differently by different people. It is there-
fore no wonder that competent works on Haiti do not completely agree
with one another in many respects, or that they seem, now and then, to be
saying different or even contradictory things. Yet in many instances the
seeming inconsistencies are in reality only minor variants within an over-
all scheme.

The purpose of this book is to present a broad view of certain aspects 121
of Haitian culture and wherever possible to extract some of the flavor of 241
Haitian thinking as well as its sense. It is easy to be fooled in regard to
both. I remember seeing an old bearded man in the mountains beyond
Furcy walking around his freshly hoed garden breaking a ripe tomato
into small juicy bits which he scattered on the ground. It was about as
primitive a method of planting as I had ever seen, and I wondered if even

121 one seed from that tomato would ever take root under the hot sun. Some
241 time later, when I knew this man well, I talked to him about the care
with which seeds must be planted if they are to grow properly. I told him
121 how *we* grew *our* tomatoes. He listened carefully, nodding his head.
241 When I had finished he said: "Yes, that must be a good way to do things
776 in your country. But here in this valley God is good. He does not forget
his children. From the broken tomato many plants will sprout. When
God is good to you, you do not have to count the seeds." I suggested that
perhaps one should not waste any of the precious seeds that God had
provided; and to this he replied: "How is there waste? My garden is made
to flourish by Zaka [the country man's special deity]. Some people give
Zaka a feast every year, but between times they forget. Zaka helps me in
my work, and I don't forget him. When I break the tomato and put it on
the ground that way, it is a little taste for Zaka. Whatever I plant, I give
him some. He is good to me, I am good to him."

241 What I learned from many incidents like this one was that the eye does
771 not always see correctly. The old man was not just planting tomatoes, nor
782 was he performing a conventionalized ritual act. It was a highly personalized
act of faith in nature and confidence in the deity who shared his work.

771 A large part of this book deals with Vodoun, the religious practices
78 based on West African traditions. One soon discovers that the songs and
[121] dances of Vodoun ritual are not merely music and motion supplementing
and decorating more serious affairs. Virtually every aspect of Vodoun
ritual is placative or invocational. The songs that are sung and the dances
that are danced are direct supplication of various supernatural forces.

121 Undoubtedly, a number of principles which are put forward in this
184. study do not apply equally to every region of Haiti; but they are, I think,
78 true in general terms. Not until one has accepted the fact that different
explanations exist for given phenomena, that the same rites are performed
in different fashion in different places, and that the cult priests themselves
do not agree on many details, may one begin to work toward a general
view of the Haitian scene.

771 All of Haitian life is not Vodoun. And there are of course some Haitians
184 who are relatively outside the central circle of its influence. But the inner
533 meanings of Vodoun and its relationship to the total view of life permeate
535 the entire scene. Music, too, binds together practically the entire fabric of
Haitian existence. It is essential not only to the cult temple but to countless
[461] workaday activities. Agrarian work groups often perform their tasks
to the accompaniment of a drum. And in the cult temple, the iron hoe of
the fields often serves as a percussion instrument.

000 *The Drum and the Hoe* is the result of studies made over a period of

Vodoun is clearly more than ritual of the cult temple. It is an integrated 771
system of concepts concerning human behavior, the relation of mankind to those who have lived before, and to the natural and supernatural forces of the universe. It relates the living to the dead and to those not yet born. It "explains" unpredictable events by showing them to be consistent with established principles. In short, it is a true religion which attempts to tie the unknown to the known and thus create order where chaos existed before.

As in Dahomey, it is not a system imposed from above but one which 771
pushes out from below. It is bred and nurtured in the family, in the towns, 793
and in the fields. It is common law, with deep roots in an unbroken and 794
continuous past. The priests of Vodoun do not control it and direct its 776
course. They, like the least fortunate peasant, simply move about within it and make use of its resources. They are its servants and its interpreters. In their cult centers, the principles of Vodoun are brought into sharp focus and dramatized. Vodoun is democratic in concept. Any man or woman may have direct contact with the deities or dead ancestors without the intervention of the cult priest. There is no place or situation beyond the influence of the loa or beyond the limits of Vodoun. At every crossroads is the spirit of the crossroads guardian, Legba, and on every long trail is the spirit of the Master of the Highway.

The cult priest nevertheless plays a significant and essential role. He 793
translates beliefs that otherwise might tend to become amorphous into 182
formalized action. He is a teacher, a repository of cult learning, and a vital catalyst. He gives form to abstraction, and practical meaning to symbols. He is the intellectualizing agency of a tremendous emotional force. Through his knowledge of the substance and forms of Vodoun, his experience in dealing with the loa, and in some instances his capacity to set magical forces into action, the cult priest is a dynamic power within his community.

Though the making of *pouins* and *magie* (ritual magic) and *ouangas* 793
(aggressive magic directed against individuals) is within the realm of the 789
cult priest's activities, these things are part of Vodoun only in a subsidiary 754
sense. Magic lurks on the periphery of Vodoun. It has little or no place 771
in the placating of the deities or the dead. It concerns the relationship of the living with each other and with *lou-garos* (*loups-garous*) and *baka* (demons). Although cult rituals include various pouin and magie ceremonies, the cult priest draws upon magic as he draws upon other mystic arts and fields of learning—leaf doctoring, divination, Catholic ritual, and Masonic symbolism. He attempts to bring together all thinking that widens the scope of Vodoun, in order to strengthen his hand to deal with

The
loa makes his appearance in Vodoun ritual by possessing ("mounting") 794
one or more of the participants. When these possessions first occur, the 787
possessed persons lapse into a kind of frenzy without controls or direction. 776
They may stagger, fall, and go into convulsions. The deity must be controlled so that he will not harm the person whose body he takes over. The [793]
houngan eventually establishes a conditioned, formalized response to possession; and once this is achieved, the loa is regarded as having been tamed.
The *hounsi bossale* then becomes eligible for elevation to the status of 794
kanzo. The term *kanzo* means "to tie fire"; that is, to conquer or show mastery over fire. Demonstrations of supremacy of possessed persons over flames, hot coals, and red-hot metal characterize many Vodoun rituals. In the kanzo ritual the initiate must undergo the test of boiling oil.

The hierarchy of the cult temple, in general, looks like this: 794 [793]

Houngan (or *Mambo*)—chief of the hounfor
Laplace—first assistant to the houngan
Mambo caille—"mistress of the house"
Houngénicon—topmost of all the hounsi
Hounsi kanzo—the highest grade of hounsi
Hounsi bossale—the lowest grade of hounsi

Among the hounsi there are some who have special duties or functions. There is the *reine silence,* for example, whose job is to maintain order. The one assigned to cook the various sacrifices is called the *hounsi cuisinière,* and so on.

There is no single, clear-cut process for becoming a Vodoun priest. A 793
man with special talents may rise from the rank of hounsi and eventually become a houngan by succession. Or a person with a strong *connaissance* may simply feel the call—sometimes in a dream—and establish himself as a houngan or bocor. If such a man demonstrates that he is "strong," a following will gather around him to constitute his *société.*

When a houngan dies, his cult center may be abandoned, or it may be taken over by another established houngan or by the deceased man's protégé. Frequently the laplace will inherit the cult temple and all that goes with it. Acquisition of a cult center by inheritance is looked upon as a means of keeping an established hounfor intact. The man who wishes to achieve the rank of houngan applies to the oldest and most venerable cult priest in the district and announces that he wishes to receive the *asson* (the ritual rattle) that is, to become a houngan. If the elder priest approves and wishes to sponsor the younger man's elevation, he consults other reputable houngans and arranges for a *grand service* for purification and investiture. The elder cult priest conducts the ceremonies. He is regarded as especially wise because of his age and long experience in dealing with the loa, whose

in many details. But, in general, the cult establishment consists of a central 346
building of one or more rooms with an adjoining court, or peristyle,
over which there is a covering—usually a straw roof. The covering, called
the *tonnelle*, is supported by a number of poles, one of which is placed
squarely in the center of the court. This center pole—the *po'teau mitan* or 346
po'teau planté—is the focus of most of the ritual activities. The loa who 796
descend upon the service enter by way of this pole. The ritual *vèvès*, or [776]
flour paintings, are made at its foot. Around it all the dancing takes place.
On certain rare occasions when rituals are held in the open, a carefully
selected tree becomes the center post—though it is by no means certain
that the po'teau mitan is not, in fact, a symbolic tree.

The building adjoining the peristyle contains the inner sanctum. Here 346
are deposited the paraphernalia of the cult, such as ritual bottles and jars, 794
flags of the société, and the iron kettles used in various ceremonies. On the 778
walls there may be primitive paintings of the special loa of the hounfor, 776
or perhaps of his symbol. The loa of the sea, Agwé, may be represented 353
by a ship. Damballa, the serpent-rainbow loa, may be represented by a [796]
snake or a rainbow. Usually there are colored lithographs of Catholic
saints, who have both Catholic and African names. And there are hand-beaten
iron crosses, dishes containing Indian celts in which loa are believed
to reside, gourd bowls, and carved wooden double and triple bowls
used for services to dead twins and triplets. Upon the altar place, called
badji, there are the *criches* or *govis*, earthen jars or bottles in which rest
the loa removed from the heads of people who have died. Sometimes
special niches are built on the hounfor grounds for the deities. Each cult
priest designs his hounfor in his own way.

A hounfor belonging to a mambo near the town of Croix des Missions 346
gave the appearance of having a large and prosperous société. Under the 794
tonnelle eight beautifully carved Arada drums were suspended from a 353
single peg. At a respectable distance hung a Martinique drum used only 778
for dances on the occasion of a Nine Night. Inside the hounfor was an [534]
impressive display of sacred objects and decorations. One corner of the [796]
room was reserved for Symbi Yendézo, a patron loa of drinking water [776]
and rainfall. He was portrayed on the wall as a long, thin snake crawling
in a maze of crosses. On the ground beneath the picture was a small concrete
pool, in which two water snakes swam. Another corner was reserved
for Agwé, and on his wall was a picture of a steamship. Along the back
of the altar was an impressive array of govis, containing the spirits removed
from the heads of deceased persons. There was a large plate of loa
stones, and various protective charms stood near by. Flags and sabres

346 794 353 778 were stacked against the wall, and set about in various places were several assons, iron crosses, Catholic lithographs, chains and iron bars for the loa Ogoun, candles set in bottles, and an old forged double bell of African design.

346 353 Some of the hounfors found elsewhere are more elaborate and reflect the richer resources of the immediate community, or the creative impulses of the houngan and his helpers, or the pressure of competition. Some cult temples are prolific with painted designs and symbolic representations of the deities. Others are unpretentious, simple, and even Spartan.

346 [113] In his book *En Haiti,* written approximately fifty years ago, Eugene Aubin describes a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain, a few miles from Port-au-Prince, as he saw it in 1906:

> 346 353 794 778 [The] *hounfor* is fronted by a *peristyle,* which is used for the Vodoun dances and services; it is a large area, with a floor of beaten earth, covered with a straw roof. On three sides the walls rise to support the roof; on the fourth there is the inscription:
>
> *Société la Fleur de Guinée*
> *Roi d'Engole*
> *[Flower of Africa Society*
> *King of Angola]*
>
> indicating the name of the patron of the society [the loa Roi Angole, or Wangol], over which the *houngan* presides. The *hounfor* is an ordinary house, a little larger than average. The sanctuary contains a principal *pé* [altar], running the whole length of the room on one side, and another altar, a little smaller, in one of the corners. These *pés* are altars largely made of brick, in which the under part is decorated with hearts and stars in relief; above, draperies hang from the ceiling. The lateral *pé* is divided into three compartments. There are, therefore, four sections in ● [776] all, consecrated to each of the *loa* served in the *hounfor:* Aguay Aoyo [Agwé Woyo], Damballa, Ogoun Badagry, and Loco [Loko], Nago King. Maître Aguay is represented by the customary little boat; a medallion is consecrated to Monsieur Damballa, shown holding two snakes in his hand; a figure on horseback represents Ogoun Badagry, with a woman at one side holding a flag; Papa Loco is pictured in full uniform, smoking a pipe and fanning himself. The walls are covered with religious paintings [Catholic lithographs]. The back of the altar is occupied by numerous carafes in baked clay, called *canaris,* which contain the . . . *mystères* [spirits taken from the heads of the dead] gathered in the *hounfor;* in front are bottles of wine, liqueurs and vermouth presented to them in homage; then the plates, the cups for the *mangers-marassas* [feasts for the twin spirit], crucifixes, hand bells, *assons* for directing the dance or calling the *loa;* plates filled with polished stones [celts] inherited from the Indians—"thunder stones," symbols of Damballa, which Saugo [Sobo] the god of lightning hurls from the sky into the enclosure of his favorite *papaloi* [*houngan*]. Beside these miraculous stones are many coins of copper or silver [property of the *loa*]. The *loa* . . . possess coins of Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, minted in 1811; of Frederick VII of Denmark, 1859; of Charles IV of Spain, 1783, and of President Boyer, dated year 27 and year 30 of Haitian Independence. On the ground there is placed a coconut-oil lamp; in the corner, the flags of the *hounfor* and the saber of [the] *laplace,* the man who acts as master of ceremonies in the services.

> 000 346 778 333 776 in the services. In the court, the bases of four sacred trees . . . are surrounded by circles of masonry [low brick walls]. These *reposoirs* are inhabited by the *loa* Legba, Ogoun, Loco and Saugo.[5]

114 346 778 There is little in Aubin's description to suggest that hounfors were much different a half century ago from what they are today. He errs in identifying the "thunder stones" solely with Damballa. But his eye for detail was acute. In 1950 a mambo in the neighborhood of this hounfor described by Aubin affirmed that some of the loa stones and old coins which he mentioned are still to be found among the properties of a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Others were lost in one of the cleric-inspired [797] raids which despoiled cult temples of drums and other paraphernalia about fifteen years ago.

78 Many services are held outside the hounfor and the peristyle. Some rituals, such as animal sacrifices and "talking to the loa below the water," may take place some distance from the cult buildings. Indeed, various Vodoun ceremonies may be held at waterfalls, at the seashore, in sacred groves, in ordinary homes, in a boat at sea,[6] or under a sacred tree.

The rites of the hounfor are almost without number. They are associated with the supplication or conciliation of virtually countless deities, each of which has his own special service. There are services in multitudinous combinations and permutations for the dead, for twins, for albinos, and for unborn children. There are ceremonies for the elevation of hounsi and for initiation, smoke and fire ordeals, and tests of other kinds. There are *mangé loa* (feasts for the deities) and *mangé morts* (feasts for the dead). There are services for the sick, for the crops, and for the harvest. In one context or another, Vodoun relates to nearly every aspect and phase of life—and its counterpart death. Since every region, every locality, and, in fact, almost every hounfor has developed its own ritual out of the common materials, it is possible to see hundreds of ceremonies without ever seeing precisely the same one twice. Yet the common elements bind them all together.

787 One such prime element is the possession, the "mounting" of the human body by one of the deities. Possession is a psychological phenomenon common to the rites of many cults throughout the world. It is known in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. It is not the unique property of the African and his Haitian descendant. In the United States it is a commonplace not only among certain Negro cults but certain white cults as well. The United States Negro had ample West African inspiration for his seizures in the church and at the baptism. The intellectual meaning of these seizures has changed, as have their outward forms to a measurable extent, but their emotional content has not altered.

[5] [Translated from the French of Aubin, En Haiti, pp. 57-59. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

[6] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

782 In Haiti the possession takes many forms, according to the nature of the deity who has entered the body, and depending on whether the possessed person has learned to "control" that deity. The possessing, or "mounting," of the possessed individual is manifest proof of the loa's existence and his constant proximity. [771] [776] Vodoun is built upon the premise of the existence of loa, and the possession is the instrument of direct contact and of constant proof of the loa's imminence.

771 179 776 Although much of Vodoun is cast in the Dahomean mold, it is no longer what it was originally in Dahomey. Many of the original deities of the Dahomean Earth pantheon, the Sky pantheon, and the Thunder pantheon have survived. Others have been forgotten, but in their place there has grown a vast array of loa, recruited partly from the Yoruba deities and perhaps from deities of other West African tribes. By far the largest group has come into existence in Haiti—loa whose names, at least, probably would go unrecognized in West Africa.

177 797 771 776 There have been prolific intrusions into Vodoun from the rites of the Catholic Church, though they have not affected the general framework of the system. The original Dahomean supreme being, Nananbuluku, is nearly forgotten; in her place the Christian God is named in many a Vodoun service. Yet, though God is the supreme creator, giver, and taker, it is the loa who must be supplicated and mollified. 771 793 797 177 175 Most important Vodoun rituals are begun under the supervision of the *prêt' savane,* or "bush priest," who leads off with brief prayers from the Catholic rites. While the Catholic Church itself rejects any direct part in Vodoun, the self-tutored prêt' savane, unordained and unsponsored by the Church, brings elements of its theology into the hounfor. The origins of the prêt' savane are not clear. But there is little doubt that his place in Haitian life became assured during the years of conflict between postrevolutionary governments and the Church of Rome. After the slave revolts of 1791, the priests of the French colony fled from the scene or went into hiding along with the other white colonists. From the date of Haitian independence throughout the following half century, Haiti was "in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church."[1] Some Haitian presidents were friendly toward the Catholic Church; others even had the objective of making [659] Catholicism a state religion with the president at its head. Henry Christophe, for example, made the Catholic Church official but stipulated that ecclesiastical decrees must be approved by the president. Alexandre Pétion's constitution for southern Haiti (the country was divided) also established the Church as official but laid upon it strong restrictions.

175 659 793 Leyburn points out that in 1814 there were in Christophe's kingdom only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. Dur-

[1] Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 119. Cf. p. 349, category 116. -- Analyst]

They know where the sun rises,
793 and they address St. Nicholas, who opens the day, and they know the wish
78 of God. In the name of St. Nicholas they raise a glass of water and ask
[177] God for the power to do."

● [076] In ordinary usage the Haitian refers to the various cults or "nations"
794 as though they were quite separate and mutually exclusive. He speaks of
184 the *service* Pétro, or *rite* Nago, or the *nanchon* Ibo. Yet in practice the cults
78 are usually bound together into two or three major groups.

The "nations" belonging to the Vodoun (or Dahomey) group include the Arada or Dahomé, the Anago, the Mahi, the Amine, and the Ibo. There is ample evidence that the cults of these "nations" were once separate and apart. Even today in isolated regions of Haiti there are cult centers devoted exclusively to Nago deities. Elsewhere, Mahi or Ibo services are held without the intrusion of "foreign" rites and deities. Some cult centers have several hounfors—one for Dahomé, one for Nago, one for Ibo, and so on, with a separate building for the "dead" spirit Gèdé. More often, however, one finds a single hounfor containing separate altars. Of all the "nations" within the Vodoun group, the Ibo perhaps has the most independent status, and in some regions it is tied in with Pétro rather than Vodoun rites.

The Pétro group also includes numerous "nations," some completely absorbed, others more loosely affiliated. Within this group, which for convenience may be called the Congo-Guinée family, are the Pétro, Bumba, Moundongue, Bambarra, Congo Loangue (Loango), and other "nations." In certain regions the Congo cult, like the Ibo, is regarded as separate and apart. Sometimes the Pétro service is kept distinct from the others, though it has drawn so heavily on them for its roster of deities that the distinction is not easily seen. In places such as Port-au-Prince where the cults have deeply infiltrated one another, major differences between the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée rites have disappeared, and altars to both Pétro and Dahomé deities may be found within the same hounfor.

It is not difficult to detect a certain pattern of regional grouping within the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée families. Within the Vodoun family are gathered "nations" from Dahomey, Togoland, and Nigeria, while in the Congo-Guinée cycle are "nations" from Central Africa, miscellaneous "nations" such as the Bambarra, and the Pétro cult which is regarded as "Haitian" rather than "African," but whose rites and loa have been recruited in large measure from other services.

One often hears of Kitta services, or Chango services, or Legba rites. These are not separate cults but simply rituals for specific loa.

[P.19]

3. The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains

The supernatural world of the common people of Haiti is a vast, rich, and unexplored world. It is peopled with thousands of gods who may at any time come down a rocky mountain trail, or up from the bottom of the sea, or out of the springs where people drink, to enter the hounfor of the Vodoun priest or the humblest of thatched huts. The gods—variously called *loa, mystère, hounaié,* or *vodoun*[1]—may come at strange, unexpected moments to the unlikeliest places. Yet whenever they come they are recognized for what they are. The things they say and do bear the mark of their character and their special powers, and usually there is little disagreement over their identity. 776 ●

The Haitians tell you that the loa live "in Africa," or on "the island below the sea," or "beneath the water," or in a mythological city called La Ville-aux-Camps. The loa are believed to share this residing place with the spirits of certain categories of the dead. What goes on in the land of the loa is no man's knowledge and every man's conjecture. They say that a few privileged people have been able to go down "below the water" and return. 776 772 787

In the region of Gros Morne there is a legend of a woman named Madame Ste Île who went under the water and returned after seven years. There is another widespread tale of a man near La Bai Moustique who, in full public view, walked into the bay and disappeared, and returned in a few hours bearing a cake in his hands—a gift from the loa below the water. And in the hills near Aux Cayes in the south a story is told about a loa named Général Clermeil, who drove up in a fine carriage and carried off a woman to his place below the water. 776 787

On certain occasions the loa come to pass the time among their "children" in Haiti. When a loa comes to the people he enters the body of one or another of them, or he enters many of them at the same time. In cult terminology, these people are his "horses." The loa mounts his horses, as

[1] [For footnote, see category 116, pp. 349-350.--Analyst]

776 787 they say, and "rides" them. What the possessed persons do then depends upon the personality and whim of the loa. Generally they take on the special personal characteristics of the loa. Their voices and manners change and their postures and attitudes undergo transfiguration. They may talk about the "island below the water," about community ancestors, about intimate affairs of the community, or about how things are going back in Africa. Sometimes they utter words or phrases recognized as "African language." And on occasion possessed persons talking *langage* are said to be speaking Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, or Spanish. At the moment of first impact, when the loa enter their heads, they stagger, jerk, and tremble, often falling on the ground. Then, soon afterward, their behavior begins to move in a groove of conventionalized activity.

[346] [778] [782] Most commonly the loa arrive during rituals or dances. They come by way of the *po'teau mitan,* the center pole which supports the roof of the peristyle. It is around this pole that the sacred vèvès, or flour drawings, are made. At the foot of the pole sacrifices are offered and libations are poured.

787 793 [533] Yet possession may occur anywhere and at any time. The sound of a certain drumbeat may be the signal for it, or a sudden fright, or an emotional crisis, or any situation to which possession has been conditioned. The houngan or the mambo may facilitate possession, control it, and terminate it. The cult priest is acutely sensitive to the conditions favorable to possession. He knows how to heighten emotional tension and how to soften it. A competent houngan "plays" his service as though it were a delicate instrument. He takes everything in, issues instructions to his servitors from time to time, orders the drum tempo increased or diminished, knows how to change pace. Sometimes he hovers in the background unobtrusively, encouraging the singing and dancing like a benevolent father. At other times he comes to the center of the activities and takes command. He becomes the focus of all eyes. His slightest action is watched with intensity. He may take the hand of one of the servitors, pirouette him about, and compel the loa to enter. When the servitor is "mounted," the houngan may conduct him through ritual activity. At the right moment the houngan may help the loa to leave.

776 787 The spectators who observe possession in others are usually aware of the identity of the loa who has entered. When the ancient loa Damballa Wèdo comes in, his "horse" falls to the ground, wriggles like a snake, and makes what are considered to be snakelike sounds in his throat. For Damballa is the venerable deity identified with the rainbow, which in ancient Dahomean lore was thought to be the great serpent come out from the underworld to drink after a rain. When the loa Ogoun Chango enters,

his "horse" may trample in glowing coals, plunge his hands in boiling oil, 776
or play with red-hot iron bars. For Ogoun Chango is a fire-eater—a deity 787
of the forge and of battle. The deity Legba is characterized as a limping old man. A "horse" possessed by Legba may cavort about on a kind of cane-crutch called a Legba stick. Each loa has his distinctive mark. As the Haitians say, "you learn about the loa by watching his horses."

In addition to having homes in Africa or below the water, most loa 776
have special residing places in Haiti, such as stones, caves, trees, waterfalls, 778
or springs. One may come across a boulder or a bamboo grove sacred to [782]
a certain loa, and food offerings are likely to be seen there. Many loa are identified with some specific variety of tree and will "inhabit" all such trees throughout the country. Loa Calbassie, for example, lives in the
calabash tree, and Loa Général Brisé in the chardette tree. Offerings to [782]
these deities are set out underneath the tree or hung in its branches, and services may be held around the trunk.

Loa also live in the old Carib and Arawak celts which are found from time to time. These "loa stones," as they are called, are identified by their forms and their ability to pass certain tests. Some Haitians declare the stones must be able to "whistle," to perspire when blown upon, and to "talk." The loa stones ordinarily are passed on from one generation to another, in the hounfor and in the peasant hut alike. In this way the loa
who inhabit them are inherited. Sometimes, but rarely, stones are sold; [432]
disposing of a loa stone requires an elaborate ceremony to guarantee that [782]
the seller will not be injured by the loa, who is likely to feel "wounded." In such a ceremony the loa is fed and placated and asked to go his way in
peace. The loa stones are sometimes called "thunder stones," in the belief [171]
that they were hurled to earth by the deities Kebiou, Sobo, and Chango
(all of whom had similar functions among the Arada and Yoruba peoples of West Africa). The stones are cared for by their owners with the greatest reverence.

Loa are acquired by individuals in various ways. Many Haitians hold 776
that every infant is born with a *mait' tête*—a spirit who is "master of the head." In this light, no individual is without a loa, although the deity may never manifest interest in the individual by an act of possession. A man may acquire a loa in the course of his life, although in that event the original mait' tête must be retired from his head. The "inherited" loa are usually not the personal deities but the special protectors of the household or the hounfor and are known as "loa of the house" or "family loa."

Should a man acquire a new loa to replace the old as his mait' tête, he 776
must undergo a ceremony known as *lavé tête*—the "washing of the head." 789
The old loa is retired and sent away, leaving the field clear for the new

776 one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be
789 retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be
[828] taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

776 The mait' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies.
764 Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below
[775] the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

776 Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual,
787 the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or
789 admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[3]

776 Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which
[152] the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

776 Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom
171 out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo.
[182] They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

776 Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely
177 African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore
171
797

of the Catholic Church and fused with old folk beliefs of Europe. In 776 ●
Dahomey, which was the wellspring for much of Haiti's culture, there 171
was no supreme deity quite like the one introduced to the slaves by the 177
missionaries. There was a pantheon of gods with Mawu and Lisa at the 797
top. They were children of a common parent, Nananbuluku. None of these deities was strictly comparable to our idea of a supreme being. Nananbuluku survives in Haiti as Nananbouclou or Nananbélécou, one of many loa. Among the neighboring Yoruba the high god was Olorun. Like the Dahomean Mawu and Lisa, Olorun was quite remote from the lives of men. The gods who were invoked and placated were the several hundred *orisha* created by Olorun. The nearby Ashanti people had a simpler pantheon, with the sky god Nyame supreme among them.

In the present Haitian concept of the supernatural, God is at the very 771
apex of the pantheon, though he is distinctly of another order. His power 776
as the supreme source of all things is fully recognized. A Haitian song, 78
associated with Vodoun ritual but of probable recent origin, goes:

> *C'est Bondieu qui voyé moin, quand li vlé moin l'apprend.* [Ex. 37] [539]
>
> It is God who sent me, when he wants me he'll take me.

Another song, from the Guinée service, goes:

> *Oh, Kitta, oh so'ti nan dleau, li tout mouillé!*
> *Oh, nen point houngan passé Bondieu nan pays-ya!* [Ex. 36]
>
> Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is dripping wet!
> Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Although it is recognized, or at least stated, that God is a supreme force, God is not regarded as the entire supernatural force of the world. In many Vodoun services the houngan may invoke, as separate categories of the unseen, the loa, the dead, the *marassas* (twin spirits), and God. Haitians do not have a consistent schematized picture of the supernatural world. God comes first, but (as in West Africa) he is less immediate than the loa. He is identified with destiny; yet within the framework of that destiny man's lot can be bettered or worsened through dealings with the dead, the baka and loup-garos (demons and vampires), and the cult priests.

In many of the folk tales of Haiti, God appears as another character in 776
a cast which may include as protagonists animals, loa, Christian saints, 539
and ordinary men and women. One such tale is about a visit which all the dogs decided to pay to God. They started off through the woods together, but one of them was distracted by the smell of carrion. He left his friends for a brief time, found the carrion, and ate some of it. Then he hurriedly joined his companions again. Together they came to God's house and were admitted to the parlor, where they sat around making polite conver-

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sation with God and one another. But after a while God caught the scent of the carrion which was still smeared on the nose of the dog who had eaten it. He sniffed the air several times to test the unpleasant odor. Misjudging it, he concluded that one of the dogs had befouled his parlor, and he demanded to know who had done this impolite thing. The dogs were deeply concerned that one of their party had desecrated God's house. They immediately began to run around smelling each other to determine who the culprit was. But they never found the evidence, because it was on a dog's nose. The dogs still, to this day, are trying to discover who committed a deed that never actually happened.

In some of the tales God competes in the real world with other supernatural and natural forces. One story tells how he was overcome by a Vodoun priest:

A houngan named Bocor Zandolite once held a great ritual service. People came from the whole countryside. It was a long service, scheduled to last for seven weeks. Chickens, goats, and bulls were sacrificed. The finest drummers in the country were drumming. Everyone danced, and the celebration went on day after day, night after night, without stopping. The noise was deafening. God heard it. It kept him from sleeping at night, and in the daytime he could not concentrate on his work. Finally, God decided he would have to put a stop to it. So he called St. John and instructed him to go down and order Bocor Zandolite to bring the service to an end. St. John went down and approached the gate of Bocor Zandolite's hounfor. Bocor Zandolite met him at the gate. He took St. John by the hand. St. John sang:

Factionnaire ouv'é bayé pou' moin passé!
Guard, open the gate for me to pass!

And Bocor Zandolite replied by singing:

Wa wa lé bandja bandja!
Bocor Zandolite wa wa lé bandja bandja! [Ex. 38]

[This is supposed to represent the houngan talking *langage*.] Then he shook St. John's hands three times and pirouetted him around, first to the left and then to the right. Suddenly St. John staggered and began to talk *langage*. He grasped the center pole of the dance court and twirled round and round it. Then Bocor Zandolite gave him a lighted candle and a glass of water, and St. John spilled a bit of the water on the ground in honor of the loa who had entered his head.

When a week went by and St. John didn't come back, God became angry. The noise of the drumming and singing was getting worse. So he

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called St. Patrick and sent him down to stop the ceremony. St. Patrick approached the houmfor and sang: 776 534

Factionnaire oun'é bayé pou' main passé!

And again Bocor Zandolite came to the gate and sang:

Wa wa lé bandja bandja!
Bocor Zandolite wa wa lé bandja bandja!

He took St. Patrick by the hands, pirouetted him around, and a loa came into St. Patrick's head, too.

Another week went by, and when St. Patrick didn't return, God sent St. Michael. The same thing happened to St. Michael. God then sent St. Anthony, and later he sent St. Peter. But when St. Peter didn't return, God became very angry indeed. He hadn't slept for weeks. So he decided to go down himself and put an end to the affair. He approached the houmfor singing "Factionnaire oun'é bayé pou' main passé!" And Bocor Zandolite replied as he had before. He took God by the hands to greet him. He shook hands downward three times, then he pirouetted God to the right and to the left. God suddenly staggered and reeled from one end of the habitation to the other. The drummers beat a special salute, and the singers sang loudly and clapped their hands, for God had a loa in his head.

This tale appears to relish the superiority of the loa over God. Yet there is no sense of sacrilege. Although the Haitian concept of God is that of a supreme force, and a source of good, the Christian deity also has some of the attributes of paramount gods in certain West African religious systems which make him less remote and even, on occasion, somewhat fallible. He figures in Haitian lore very much like the Ashanti sky god, Nyankonpon, who has dealings with animals and human beings and is sometimes outwitted by them. Although Nyankonpon has the power to dispense favors, justice, and punishment to mortals, he himself lives within, rather than superior to, a well-established physical system. His marvelous deeds are only slightly superior to those of other, lesser gods, or of sorcerers, or of the trickster Anansi. In fact, in one Ashanti tale Nyankonpon finds himself very much in the same situation as God in the Haitian tale, being forced to dance to the music of the trickster's drum. 776 534 121 177

The Christian saints, too, have been incorporated into the Haitian system, and they also have been syncretized with Vodoun elements. They have become identified with various loa according to their most obvious characteristics. St. Patrick, because he is always pictured with snakes, has become one with Damballa and Ayida, who are also symbolized by snakes. Erzilie Fréda, the female loa characterized by purity, has become 776 177

776 one with the Holy Virgin. St. Jacques has become one with Ogoun, St.
197 George with Linglessou, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba,
guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Marassa Trois. In northern Haiti the word *zange* (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with loa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified with one loa, sometimes with another.

776 No one in Haiti knows all the loa. Some of them are so ancient as to be
nearly forgotten. Others are spontaneous creations or revelations on the
177 part of a possessed person. Some loa names may be the result of a devotee's
178 seizing upon a word or phrase in a religious song and imparting to it the
concept of a loa. Sometimes a word in a phrase of *langage* is taken to be a loa's name, and sometimes agglutinated Creole words become the name of a loa.

776 The possibility of frequent additions to the list of loa is heightened still
178 further by the general illiteracy of the Haitian people and the lack of a
197 stabilizing influence in the written word. The Creole language has
marked regional differences. Furthermore, change of consonants or vowels
[193] is a commonplace occurrence, so that a single loa's name may have several
forms. One may well wonder whether Aza, Adja, and Akadja were not originally a single individual. Nevertheless, in the Haitian scheme they are now different personalities.

776 There is one more complicating factor in identifying loa or compiling
171 a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the
names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a
552 variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear
to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coqui-nan-Mer—Coqui-in-the-Sea. A loa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sobo may be called So, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the loa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Chango or Chango Ogoun, Général Brisé or Brisé Général, Congo Savane or Savane
[551] Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of
Haiti, Nord Alexis, is often called Alexis Nord.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

Boulicha Nago, or Boulicha of the Nagos; Ézilie Wèdo and Ézilie Doba, 776
possibly from Wèdo and Doba in Dahomey; Tijean Pied Chèche (Tijean 171
Dry Feet), a loa of bad character, "dry feet" signifying malevolence; and 552
Legba Grand Chimin, or Legba of the Highway.

Identification of loa is often made difficult by the use of the generic or 776
family title only. The term Nago covers all the loa associated with this 552
"nation" (Nago Piment, Amine Nago, Boulicha Nago, etc.), but in a song or service any one of them is as likely as not to be referred to simply as Nago, with no clue to his exact identity. Each listener takes the name to designate the Nago loa with whom he is most familiar, unless possession occurs and the loa is otherwise identified by the behavior of his "horse."

On the whole, it appears that there was in the beginning a strong aware- 776
ness of regional origins. There are names among the cult pantheons which 174
indicate Senegal, Dahomey, Nigeria, Congo, and Angola origins. Many 552
loa bear the names of African towns. Among the Ogoun family of loa, for example, are such regional designations as Badagry and Jèkkè, the first being a town in Nigeria and the second in Dahomey. It is clear that a detailed geographical knowledge of certain West African regions would considerably illuminate a study of Haitian loa.

Local shrines, too, doubtless enter into the naming system. Badagry is 346
the name of a town in Nigeria, and it is also a Dahomean word designat- 174
ing the structure in which young men used to be circumcised and initiated 778
into the secrets of warriors. In this particular light, the loa Ogoun Bada- 552
gry might be regarded as the deity of that particular ritual center.

In discussing the complicated relationship of their loa, Haitians some- 776
times say: "There are seven of everything. There are seven Marassas, seven 801
Ogouns, seven Ézilies. There are seven brothers and sisters in every family of loa." Or they say something such as: "There is only one Legba, but there are seven. There is only one Ogoun, but he has many moods and names. There is only one Ézilie, but she has seven faces." This concept is also held by the Arara (Arada) cult of Cuba. It is interesting to note the extent to which duplications and new generations of loa have been set up into family households in the most literal sense. Those families are still growing. In the Gèdé family I have counted more than thirty seemingly distinct individuals (see Appendix I)[1]. Herskovits mentions a number of others, and still more have been cited by other writers on the subject. When I pointed out to some Haitians that the Gèdé family numbered far more than seven individuals, they were unable to account for the situation. Other Haitians took the vast army of Gèdés as a matter of course. The Ogoun family, too, is large and growing. Twenty-seven Ogouns are listed in the compilation in Appendix I. Still more have been recorded elsewhere.

[1] [See p. 317ff., Category 116.-- Analyst]

776 Another factor that may explain some of the confusion over which rites a loa is attached to is the concept of the *escorte*, a kind of army or association of loa which may include deities of different nations. In discussing the loa Wanilé, for example, one Haitian noted:

"Wanilé is neither Rada nor Dahomé, but Pétro. She is an escorte, and she walks with Dahomé. In the escorte, Dahomé and Pétro walk together. A big loa—a loa with a big name—has many other loa who walk with him. In an escorte there are twenty-one in all. The escorte has a chief, and under the chief there are soldiers—that is, smaller loa who must do what the chief says.

776 754 "For example, a man goes to a houngan and gets him to send a strong loa against you to hurt you in some way—to make you sick or lose your crop. Your own loa may be a strong one, but the houngan has sent a still stronger one against you, and so your own loa can't really protect you. So he will go away and send in his place one of his escorte. This smaller loa is not as strong perhaps as the one he is replacing, but he is stronger in that the houngan did not calculate on him. He has certain abilities which he can use to help you. And it isn't suspected that he is your protector. So in this way he is in a better position than your own loa.

776 "The smaller loa go together in an escorte. Many people may have a certain loa, and he is busy all the time. If someone needs him and he can't go, he will send one of his escorte, the next one below him.

776 753 754 "If you are made sick by a loa, there are so many in his escorte you don't know which one made you sick, so you can't do anything about it. It is difficult sometimes to identify the loa that is hurting you. You really have to dig to find out who he is. You have to give a *mangé*. There is a big ceremony, and you have to be bought back from the loa. But some loa who are persecuting you won't sell you back. They won't go away. Rather than leave you alone they would see you die. Perhaps the person who sent this loa against you sent him to kill. If your own loa can't protect you he will send one of his escorte to do it. *Gainyain connain passé connain* [There is knowledge that surpasses knowledge]. *Si fer pas coupé fer, machoquette pas gainyain travaille* [If iron didn't cut iron, the blacksmith would have no work to do]."

776 [801] This concept of the escorte, some of whose members may be Rada and some Pétro, helps to explain why certain deities are identified with rites of different "nations." For the Haitian himself it provides a way of accounting for "families" that have grown beyond the ritual number seven. Yet there are some Haitians who declare that every member of an escorte is simply a different manifestation of a single deity.

780 The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the

The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the
practices of the individual cult priests. New concepts spring up, and they 776
thrive in one locality while remaining unheard of in another. Yet many 184
new concepts travel from hounfor to hounfor. As in the old days in 793
Dahomey, the Vodoun priests sometimes make journeys to visit other cult 794
centers. At one service near Jacmel, on the south coast, I met a houngan 787
from Dondon in the far north and heard him discuss with the local cult
chief the appropriate behavior of a loa who had mounted a servitor. The
Dondon houngan declared that in the north the loa conducted himself
differently. The Jacmel houngan parried with the remark that a loa's
behavior is consistent. He said there were only two possibilities concerning
the possession as described by the cult chief from Dondon: either the loa
had been mistakenly identified, or another deity had attempted to impersonate
him. Such exchanges hasten the spread of developing theology
from one area to another. They also raise contradictions which remain
forever insoluble.

That confusions and contradictions are not merely of Haitian making is 114
made clear by Herskovits' voluminous study of the pantheons of Dahomey.[3] 794
Each of the great cults—the sky cult, the earth cult, and the 177
thunder cult—has its own explanations of the origins and functions of
the deities; and even within one cult there are contradicting explanations.
The Haitians have taken over, built upon, and diverged from a Dahomean
system that contained its own contradictions. In adding to it the system of
the Yoruba, with its parallelisms and similarities, they have made the
whole picture more complex than ever.

[3] [Herskovits, Dahomey. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

[P.30]

4. Death Rites

775 776 The community of the Haitian is one that extends far beyond his immediate family and his village, for it takes in not only the various loa but multitudinous dead relatives and ancestors. Some Haitians believe that the dead live in close proximity to the loa, in a place called "Under the Water." Others hold that the dead have no special residing place. But it is the view of many that a dead person may eventually become a loa in his own right. How this happens is not entirely clear. Under certain circumstances the spirits of the newly dead do not go quietly on their way but [769] remain behind to annoy and harass the living. They must be buried with suitable ritual and properly placated throughout the years; otherwise their activities and influences will be unpredictable. Many of them, under special conditions, become almost indistinguishable from loa. And a few, in the course of time, become minor deities in the pantheons. The main loa of the Pétro cult, Dan Pétro, formerly was believed by some Haitians to be a houngan of the eighteenth century who had been buried without having [171] his own loa removed from his head. There are African precedents for deified ancestors' becoming deities. Indeed, some of the great *vodouns* and *orisha* of the Dahomean and Yoruban pantheons in West Africa are believed to be deified clan ancestors or great kings.

775 171 Whether they achieve the status of loa or not, the spirits of the dead must forever be coped with. This Haitian view of the dead is essentially that held in many parts of West Africa. Speaking of West African belief in general, Maurice Delafosse noted:

> After a creature dies, only his spirit remains. It survives with the same character, the same personality, affections and hatreds as during his lifetime, but it can no longer command the vital breath. It becomes all the more powerful on escaping from the confines of its material envelope, since it no longer needs to direct and control the functions of the body, and is not itself regulated by the vital breath. . . . These spirits are all of the same nature. They are invisible but can see and judge everything that happens. They are easily angered and mete out severe punishment to anyone

769 845 The dead twins are offered food in special earthen or gourd bowls. In any market place where pottery is sold you will find the joined marassa double or triple bowls. The annual rites for the marassas are routine, but once every five years there is a *grande service* for them.

It is not merely the twins of one's immediate family that are served, but twins—that is, the spirit of twins—in general. They are supplicated even when a family knows of no incidence of twins. In part, this precaution is a recognition that there may have been twins among ancestors long dead and forgotten. It is also recognition of a twin spirit as a separate force affecting all people. The twin spirit has been personified in the loa named Marassa. The child born after twins is believed by many Haitians to be even "stronger" and more to be placated than twins themselves. He is
[776] known as a *doçu* if a boy, *doça* if a girl. Their patron loa are known as Marassa Doçu and Marassa Doça. The patron loa of triplets is Marassa Trois. Triplets are regarded as a special category of twins. Some Haitians, in fact, believe that the twins are merely a partial manifestation of the group of three, which is completed on the birth of the doçu or doça. In the marassa feast, triplets are served in the triple clover-leaf bowl, as are twins in combination with their doçu or doça. It is also believed by some that the child born before twins is "weak" both in physical vitality and psychic powers, because his strength has been sapped by the marassas who have followed him.

776 768 [184] For some Haitians the loa Marassa is the most potent of forces to be placated at the time of death. They hold that he is only incidentally the patron of twins and triplets. His significance is said to lie in the fact that he is the spirit of the first of all human children who died. And as the child precedes the man, Marassa is the first and foremost of all loa. When a service is held for Marassa, he is given foods and beverages that all children love.

769 Rites for the dead continue endlessly for the living. Before a child is witness to a death in his own family he may observe many rituals for the family ancestors, twins, and the unknown dead. For those who are a part of Vodoun, the cycle is a perpetual one in an endless system of integration and continuity.

775 776 764 Special rites are held to remove the loa from the head of a deceased person. It is believed that the spirit of a person who has not had his loa removed will be restive and perhaps will even cause difficulties for his family and his descendants. And there is also the matter of the loa's welfare. The *mait' tête* is, in a sense, a captive in the head of the person who has died. The head is his home. But should the corpse be taken to the graveyard without the loa's having been removed, the loa would refuse to be buried

with the corpse. He wants nothing to do with the domain of the Gèdés. 775
He liberates himself from the corpse at the cemetery and retires "below the 776
water." He is no longer a friend and benefactor of the family. He cannot 764
be inherited by the children of the deceased. Such controls as the deceased once exercised over him are dissipated. He may, in fact, be angered at the treatment he has received and return only to harass the family. Thus, if a family fails to have the mait' tête of one of its members properly removed at death, it may be persecuted afterward by the "spirit" of the dead ancestor and the loa as well.

The rite of dispossessing a deceased person of his loa is called *déssounin*, 764
or *déssonné*. The essence of it is the transference of the mait' tête from the 776
head of the dead person into a special receptacle, an earthen jar called a *govi* or *pot tête*. Sometimes it is transferred to the head of a child in the family, though usually this comes later.

There have been many descriptions of this ritual, and they seem to show that, though the tradition is a constant one, the specific patterns of the services are variable. Different regions, different cult centers, and different houngans conduct the rites in different ways.

Eugene Aubin wrote, for example:

> On the day of death, the deceased is placed standing up; the *papaloi* [houngan] [793]
> conducts the rites which retire the *mystère* [loa] from the body and introduce it
> into a jar, which is then carefully sealed. On the ninth day, after the feast for the [765]
> dead, the jar is broken and liberty given to the *loa*.§

Melville Herskovits reported:

> If the dead person was a Vodun priest or otherwise had strong *connaissance*, steps [766]
> are taken . . . "to remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under [775]
> the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which may cause the family much harm if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. . . . The *houngan* [793]
> stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, into which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.&

As Herskovits understands it, it is the "soul" of the dead person that 114
would go to live "under the water," rather than the loa. This would appear 764
to be a *fusion* of two separate elements—the wandering, troublesome 775
"spirit" of a dead person and the mait' tête who retires "under the water." 776
Actually, Haitians are not always consistent in their explanations of what happens, or of the difference between loa and souls. On the hounfor altar there may be some govis that contain "souls" or "spirits" and others that contain loa; though the distinction is readily appreciated, Haitians are

§ [Translated from the French of Aubin, En Haiti, p. 212
cf. p. 350, category 116.—Analyst]

& [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, pp. 213-214
cf. p. 350, category 116. --Analyst]

764 775 sometimes hard put to explain the similarity of treatment of these two categories.

776 Another investigator, Alfred Métraux, has provided a vivid description 764 given by a Haitian of a ceremony of removing the loa. In this instance 776 the corpse was not placed in an upright position as described by Aubin but was laid on a specially prepared bed. Attending the body were the houngan, his hounsi, and a child of the dead man who was to receive the liberated loa.

> [993] The child . . . grasps in his hand a black-and-white or a white cock. On the ground in front of the bed they arrange a fine white napkin. On top of it there are syrup, candles . . . , *tafia*, and other things. After they have finished sprinkling water, clapping their hands, singing to the *loa*, they all go around the bed of the dead person. The child, with the cock in his hand, makes the rounds with the *houngan*. They wave the rooster, they wave it back and forth two, three, four, five, six times over the dead person's head. During this time all those present get possessed by the *loa*, sing, clap their hands. The dead person's bed begins to creak. The *houngan* climbs on the bed and grabs the dead person's two arms. . . . He pulls him to a sitting position. The child (into whose head the *loa* is to be transferred) strikes the chicken three times on the head of the dead person. He lets go the chicken, and the chicken flies up and starts to run all around the room, smashing pots and vessels. They grab the chicken and let it go in the air three times, shouting: *Ai bobo loa à!* Immediately the *loa* goes into the head of the dead person's child.][7]

764 776 993 The houngan cited by Métraux is described as pulling the corpse to a sitting position, but more commonly it is believed that the houngan has the power to make the body sit up by itself. A man from Jérémie explained it this way:

"The body is laid out on a mat. The houngan shakes his asson over the dead man, and talks to the loa in the head. He calls the loa's name: 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Changogolo!' He calls, calls, calls. He doesn't call the dead man's name, he calls the mait' tête. 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Get up! Wake up! Sit up!' The corpse sits up. It even talks. Then the houngan says, 'Lie down!' And the corpse lies down. But it is not the dead man who sits up. The dead man is dead. It is the mait' tête who has forced the body to sit up. After this the houngan takes the loa from the head and puts it in a pot tête. Then the body can be buried. And afterward the loa can be put in the head of someone else or freed. Or the houngan may keep the loa in the pot tête and sell it to someone who needs a loa to work for him. If they buried the corpse without a *dessounin*, the loa would resent it and go away below the water."

764 766 776 993 George Eaton Simpson has written an excellent description of a ceremony for removal of the loa from the head of a deceased houngan.[8] The

[7] [Hall and others, Haitian Creole, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 74, pp. 188-189. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

[8] [Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies," Journal of American Folklore, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162. Cf. p. 350, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

rites took place in the region of Plaisance in northern Haiti. Such a ceremony, Simpson notes, may be attended by several houngans other than the Vodoun priest who is officially in charge. They "share the obligation and pleasure of conducting this service for their colleague, their former rival, and perhaps their former enemy." In a room of the deceased houngan's house is the body, attended by the family, relatives, close friends, and the officiating houngan and his assistants. 764 766 793 776

. . . Near the body, which is covered by a sheet, are placed a jug and a new canari (a large earthen jar). The officiating houngan makes the sign of the cross, mumbles a few ritual formulas, and taking a spoon puts some "marger les morts" (special food for the dead) in the canari: plantains, yams, bananas, tairauts, sweet potatoes, corn meal, roasted corn, bread, cakes, rice, millet, meat, chicken, pistachio, chopped coconut, and other kinds of food. He then adds some water and stirs this mixture. . . . The other houngans perform the same rite. The family, friends, and others in the room imitate the acts of the houngans with the green branches which they hold in their hands. In a grave voice and with solemn gestures the officiant then appeals to the *loas* with songs and prayers. He invites them to come to the aid of their faithful servant, to protect him in the other world as they have protected him in this world. Following the songs and prayers the leader pronounces these words:

"Innocent! A good man has left us! 764
The mother of the children weeps. 766
Weep, console yourselves. 793
Bon Acasion, he was here. 776
He died. 539
Master Pierre Jean-Baptiste, he was here.
He died.
General Baptiste, he was here.
He died.
Marion who was left,
He died.
But Brother Joseph survives,
We will cry, we will console ourselves."[9]

The weeping and the cries redouble, but the *père-savane* [peh' savane] and the houngan carry on. In the other room the *père-savane* solemnly intones:

"I have only one soul
Which must be saved.
By the eternal flame,
I must preserve it."[10]

The officiating houngan speaks directly to the dead man: "Bon Marion, here is a canari that your heirs have especially prepared for you so that in the future you will not have any trouble and demand other sacrifices of them. You others, the dead, are always unreasonable. Because you have peace you forget that the times are hard and that on this earth we unfortunate men are crushed by suffering. Leave your family in peace after this service, Bon Marion. Do not torment them, and do not send illness to their children or misery to their older people. You were always a good

[9] [As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, ibid., p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155. Cf. p. 350, Category 86. -- Analyst]

[10] [Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text. Cf. p. 350, Category 86. -- Analyst]

764 766 793 ● 776 [539] father when you were living. Continue to protect your family after death. If you need other services give abundantly to your heirs in order to obtain satisfaction. Oh, good father, good servant, good parent, good friend! Good-bye! Do not forget us as we shall not forget you."[11]

Then the houngan goes to the canarie, strikes it three times with a piece of palm bark, and chants an invocation to the loa and to God, while members of the family dance where they stand, shaking the green branches they hold. There follows an invocation to twins. After a number of loa have "entered" the service, as manifested by possessions, the houngan undertakes to find out how death came to the deceased man. [787] An assistant brings the sacred divining shells[12] of the dead man, and the officiating houngan throws them on the floor, pours tafia three times, and lights a candle. The shells are then consulted. Three times he goes through the procedure of casting the shells and consulting them. Later he announces that "the death of Boss Marius is not the death of an ordinary man, that he is now resting in La Ville-au-Camp (capital of the loas which is 'under the water'), and that the loas will continue to protect his descendants provided that they show themselves worthy of protection."[13] [775] There is more singing and ritual, and then the canarie is covered. The [illegible] from the head of Marius has found a temporary resting place. A little later in the service "the houngan raises the canari as high as possible, almost as high as his face, as he repeats the last line: 'Where may I find refuge?' With a quick movement the canari is shattered. The food is scattered, the loas are satisfied, and the crowd breaks into disorderly flight. . . ."[14] A few hours later the body of the deceased is buried.

764 184 776 It is obvious that these rituals vary a good deal according to regional practices and according to the importance of the persons for whom they are conducted. Furthermore, there is a good deal of difference of opinion among Haitians as to what actually takes place when the mait' tête is taken from the head of the deceased man.

793 764 184 Although the prêt' savane (bush priest) is subsidiary to the houngan at death rites, his is nevertheless a conspicuous presence. He may begin the services with prayers for the dead, in which the family joins, while the houngan remains in the background. Later, the houngan takes over. In certain regions, however, the prêt' savane is dispensed with altogether, his function being absorbed by the houngan.

764 As reported by Herskovits, the wake for the dead is one of the most important ceremonies in the death rites. He says:

> [766] Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. . . . The wife and the children either stay

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[11] [This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, op. cit., p. 156. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

[12] [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 350.--Analyst]

[13] [Simpson, op. cit., p. 159, Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

[14] [Ibid., p. 161. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

with the corpse or are nearby with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as members of the family come and go, since the body must never be alone.[15] 764

But outside the house another kind of activity goes on. There the young people usually gather to sing gay songs, to play games, and to listen to stories. A professional storyteller, or a nonprofessional of repute, is called upon to entertain the children. He may give an entire night to Bouki and Malice stories, or to *contes* with interspersed songs in which the audience participates. Special singing games, stick games, and card games are played. But the drums are silent, both in the dead person's house and in the countryside at large. Rhythms for the game songs are provided by handclapping, or by vocal sounds which simulate percussion instruments. 764 524 53

Burial ceremonies vary according to local tradition and the status of the deceased person. Near the little fishing village of Petit Goave in southwestern Haiti, I witnessed a funeral cortege which might have been seen almost anywhere in the country. It was led by the widow of the dead man. She rode on a white horse, followed by four men carrying the dead body on a litter made of plain planks. There was no coffin, the body being covered only by its white shroud.[16] Behind the corpse plodded a group of twelve or fifteen peasants, friends and relatives of the dead man. Some of them had just come in from the fields and still carried their machetes in their hands. Others carried short *cocomacaque* sticks, which are believed useful for warding off baka and other demons who lurk along the path of the traveler. 764 [184)

The woman on the horse lamented loudly. When she came to where other peasants stood respectfully at the road's edge, she stopped her horse and faced them, raising her voice to an anguished pitch, calling on them to take note of her bereavement and of the fine virtues of the dead man. Some of the spectators whom she addressed, standing with their hats in hand, nodded and tried to say consoling words, such as "Oui Manman, li grand moune" (Yes, Mama, he was a fine man), or "Quand Bondieu vlé ou li prend" (When God wants you he takes you). A market woman with a load on her head suddenly became possessed by a loa as the cortege passed her. This seemed to increase the anguish of the widow, who lamented with increased vigor.

The four men carrying the corpse sometimes moved in a zigzag course, first to one side of the road, then to the other. When the procession came to a crossroad it stopped momentarily. The houngan, scarcely distinguishable from the other peasants in blue denim, came forward and stood in the center of the crossroads shaking his tiny hand bell and calling upon Maît' Kalfu (Master of the Crossroads) to grant safe passage. While he [793] [776)

[15] [Herskovits, op. cit., p. 208. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

[16] [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 350.--Analyst]

769 796 987 Then, faintly, came the broken voice of an old woman who was crying. The houngan said her children were waiting to see her, and asked her to enter. Moyise had been dead many generations already, but she was still crying over the circumstances of her death, and because she had left her children behind her. The houngan, speaking gently, asked her to try to stop crying because her children were waiting. Little by little she controlled herself. She greeted them all and talked with each member of the family in turn. She showed a special interest in the women and children and was concerned about family problems.

After Moyise went away, Docile, Moyise' daughter, came. She greeted them all and then complained that when she had died she had been buried in a grave near that of a thief; now she wished for her body to be moved. Alixe, on whose place the grave was situated, promised to take care of the matter, and Docile became placated. Her voice faded away. Inside the *card*, the houngan talked *langage* and rang his bell.

After Docile came Joseph and his son Jougleau. Joseph and Jougleau timed their entrance badly and came in together, both talking at once. The houngan tried to straighten out the situation, and for a moment the three of them were conversing simultaneously. Then Jougleau withdrew and returned when his father was through. After Jougleau came still later generations, represented by Ti Perci and her children, Na and Bernicia. Bernicia came crying bitterly about something. The houngan asked her to stop, because he could not bear to hear women crying. Everyone laughed, and Bernicia controlled herself.

● [776] Then Dámballa Wèdo, the ancient loa, came, speaking with an aged and broken voice. Feebly he sang his song in "African" language:

[539]

Agoé! Damballa Wédo!
Oh Damballa Wédo kian kian!
Oh Damballa Wédo kian kian!
Oh he he he Damballa Wédo kian kian!
Oh Damballa Wédo kian kian! [Ex. 39]

[776] Later, Damballa sang again, calling on Legba to act as witness to his words:

[539]

Agoé Atibon Legba oh é!
Oh Damballa Wédo é hélé manman!
Oh guinyain jou' ya changé main li hélé manman!
Oh Damballa Wédo é hélé manman!
Oh Aïda Wédo é hélé manman!
Oh guinyain jou' pou' changé main li hélé manman! [Ex. 40]

Agoé Atibon Legba oh é!
Oh, Damballa Wédo é, hélé manman!

Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kèlè manyan!* 796
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *é, kèlè manyan.* 769
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *é, kèlè manyan!* 787
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kèlè manyan!* [539]

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *caré* [776] ● to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

SERVICE FOR ÈZILIE FRÉDA AND ST. JACQUES MAJEUR

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded 796 by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes 776 of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a 346 shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy [532] of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire— [354] black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's 796 adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, [794] encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the [522] gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Woy, Manman, main ou passé mwé!" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the [793] door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in [534] his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. 796 Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums 776 played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun serv- [794] ice. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on [782] the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

796 793 [554] [202] Then a well-dressed young man entered, and the drummers swiftly changed to the salute reserved for guests of distinction. The hounsi sang, "Président passe là, l'ap monté au gouvernment!" and waved paper flags and kerchiefs. The young man was a distant relative of Stephan's; he also was a houngan.

After a while Stephan brought from his hounfor a second asson, or ritual rattle, and another small hand bell, both of which he handed to the [916] young man. He was extending the courtesy of his hounfor, sharing his instruments of authority and religious power with his fellow houngan. Then followed an exhibition between the two houngans that was half duel and half ballet. They stood face to face, each of them holding the asson in one hand and the tiny bell in the other. Stephan was "testing" the young houngan for the edification of all present. Each tiny move made by Stephan was duplicated simultaneously by his guest, as though he were a mirrored reflection.

Every posture Stephan made was duplicated instantly by his guest. The assons and the bells were agitated constantly. The rattle in the young man's hand did precisely what Stephan's did. The two men looked into each other's eyes with intensity, as though this bound their movements together and unified them. When Stephan twisted to the left, the other houngan twisted to the right. Every contortion of the young man was an exact replica of Stephan's movements. The two assons rattled out the same rhythms and the same signals; so did the bells. The backdrop for this "test" was provided by the drummers. The faces of the two men broke into a sweat from the intense nervous effort. At last it came to an end. A woman came forward and wiped their faces with a colored kerchief. The "testing" ceremony was over. The visiting houngan had been proved.

796 793 797 [532] [794] [776] Stephan then made a ritual vèvè, or maize-flour ritual drawing on the ground. Afterward there was more singing and dancing by the hounsi. They sang several songs for Ezilie Fréda, the "pure" loa. And Alexis Stephan went into a trance. It was unexpected. The servitors had not prepared for it. In this emergency the visiting houngan took over. He seemed a little anxious. He was unfamiliar with the particular psychological factors at play in this particular hounfor. He was not certain of the character of Stephan's possession. But he took over grimly. The houngénikon, an older woman, stepped forward to help. While the young houngan wielded the asson and bell, the woman issued instructions. Stephan, his head hanging back, his eyes closed, was supported by two of the hounsi. Other servitors hurriedly brought out a white sheet and spread it on the ground. A chair and a table were set upon the sheet, and Stephan was placed in the chair, where he now sat with his head hanging limply on his chest.

Stephan had been mounted by Ézilie Fréda, the deity of whiteness and 796
purity. That was why he was protected from the earth by the white sheet 787
beneath him. While the drums continued to beat, the hounsi placed upon 793
the table a bottle of wine, a clean glass, and a white plate with boiled maize [794]
meal, topped by a whole egg. Then they held over Stephan—who had be- [796]
come, for the time being, Ézilie—a second white sheet. The possessed houngan began to bend forward and back with great rapidity, toward the surface of the table and back to an upright position, his arms hanging quietly downward. The hounsi fluttered the covering sheet in such a way that the spectators could not see what was going on beneath it. In less than a minute, Stephan's movements ceased. The sheet was removed. Stephan sat limply, talking *langage*. In the white dish only the broken shells of the egg and a small portion of the meal remained. Some of the wine was gone from the upright bottle. The glass still had a little wine in the bottom. Ézilie had accepted the sacrifice. Not once had Stephan's hands changed from their hanging position or approached the table. The eggshells themselves were clean, but a tiny trickle of liquid yolk ran from the corner of Stephan's mouth. The visiting houngan rattled his asson before Stephan, who arose wearily, with the help of the hounsi, and followed him through the door into the hounfor.

Again there was dancing, and a little while later Stephan emerged from the hounfor in a bizarre military costume of red velvet, wearing black glasses, a blue military cap with a red feather, and a sword. He was almost as weird as the effigy of Gèdé that stood outside. The houngan had now become St. Jacques Majeur, or Ogoun, the loa of war and the forge. His personality had undergone a dramatic change. Strictly speaking, Stephan was not in a trance as he had been a little earlier. He was in control of his movements, which were completely conscious, and yet he was certainly not in a "normal" state of mind. Previously Stephan had been in a state of possession; now, one might say, he was in a state of obsession. He had identified himself with St. Jacques. He strode and swaggered like St. Jacques. His bearing was regal, military, and awesome. His costume should have seemed funny, like similar costumes seen during Mardi Gras days, but instead it was unworldly and impressive.

He carried a rum bottle in his hand, and he moved through the gather-
ing making people drink from it. Those who drank from the bottle were
sharing with St. Jacques. Stephan poured more rum into an iron pot on
the ground and set it afire. The hounsi kanzo, the servitors of the higher [794]
order who had been through the fire ordeal, came forward and washed
their hands and arms with the burning rum, so that at times their whole arms were aflame, until they quickly snuffed the fire out. Some of the hounsi brought their children forward and washed their arms in the burn-

796 787 793 [794] ing rum also, as a foretaste of the kanzo rites they might one day go through.

There was dancing again for others besides the hounsi. The tension had passed. The ceremony was over, and the rest of the night was simply for pleasure.

●776

GÈDÉ NIMBO, THE "DEAD" LOA

Gèdé Nimbo, also known as Baron Samedi, is one of the most powerful deities of the Haitian pantheon. He guards the cemetery and protects the graves, especially those of children. But Gèdé Nimbo is not simply another loa, he is a personification of death. Like death, he is given to whim. He is an intruder. He forces his way into services being held for other deities, behaves badly, and has to be wheedled to depart. He indulges in ribald humor when the mood strikes him, and the most solemn occasions are likely to be disturbed by his pranks. Gèdé Nimbo can be formidable when aroused, as he can be gentle and forbearing when it suits him.

Gèdé is always dressed in black, usually with a tail coat and top hat. He is always represented in this attire in the shrines where effigies of him are to be found. Elsie Clews Parsons, a number of years ago, reported this Haitian description of Gèdé:

> He is a *grande diable*. He makes all kinds of motions to make you laugh, but you must not laugh at him, for if you do he makes you "stop laughing" . . . Anything you touch, he takes and never returns, and you have to give him more and more. He smokes cigarettes, not cigars. He wears a coat and a hat, and carries a stick. He can make himself short or . . . as tall as a mast.[8]

The kind of motions Gèdé makes would in certain other cultures be regarded as obscenities. In Haiti they are merely public violations of social restraints and taboos, things no Haitian would think of doing in public view. But Gèdé, the loa of the graveyard, has special prerogatives. He does not fear criticism. He flouts propriety at will, he embarrasses, provokes, and insults with impunity.

776 787 776 At a Nago ceremony which I witnessed near Port-au-Prince, the stronghold of the Gèdé cult, Gèdé Nimbo entered with such gusto that he virtually made a shambles of the service. The first person to be mounted by the loa was the laplace, the houngan's understudy. He stiffened, twisted, jerked, and thrashed about. As the more violent phase of his possession wore off, he began to make lascivious loin movements, as though copulating with the center post. Afterward, he moved about, shaking hands and greeting various persons with insulting remarks calculated to make others laugh at the indignities. Stopping before a distinguished-looking spectator, Gèdé made a few loin movements in his direction. Grasping another man by the hands, he greeted him vigorously and inquired whether it was

[8] [Parsons, Spirit Cult in Hayti. Cf. p 351 Gèdé-[illegible]]

his *zozo* (penis) to which his glasses were affixed. As the dance pro- 796 gressed, the possessions came rapidly. The possessed persons, men and 787 women alike, leaped about the tonnelle, mimicking copulation. They 796 broke drinking glasses on the ground, threw themselves upon the drummers, and careened and crashed into spectators and dancers. In the course of the service there were nearly twenty possessions—all of them noteworthy for their portrayal of Gèdé Nimbo as a loa who has contempt for proprieties. For he is the spirit of the cemetery, the one who laughs last and best.

Near the mountain town of Kenskoff I saw another service for Gèdé, which showed a different aspect of the loa of the graveyard. It took place [793] inside the hut of a rural houngan, who was conducting the affair for his own immediate family and a few close friends. The hut itself was small. Its single room had been partitioned into two by hanging a sheet in the middle. On one side of the sheet a young child was lying on a mat next to the carefully stored Arada drums. On the other side the ceremony was taking place. Great bouquets of red flowers were arranged in a corner; above them hung a colored lithograph of the Christ child; below, on the floor, was a crude oil lamp with a floating wick. The floor area was no more than seven feet square, but at least twelve persons were crowded there, and others clustered in the doorway. Ritual flags leaned against the wall, one of red silk with a gold fringe, another of white silk with blue polka dots. A tiny space remained in the center of the floor for the houngan, whose "possession" by Gèdé was the feature of the service.

The houngan was dressed in a black stovepipe hat, a blue blouse with 796 white polka dots, and a black skirt over black trousers. In his hand he 787 carried a walking stick. He smoked a pipe constantly, a variation of the 796 customary cigarette. In the tiny space in the center of the room, the 793 houngan—or, more properly, Gèdé Nimbo—danced. The houngan's personality had changed—his voice, his posture, all his mannerisms. He spoke only through his nose, for that is the way Gèdé talks, as though he had a cleft palate.

He whirled around and around, singing and talking *langage* in turn. His family sang: [539]

Gèdé-vi yo wè agoé!
Gèdé-vi yo wè!
Papa Gèdé c'est bel!

It is Gèdé-vi they see, agoé!*
It is Gèdé-vi they see!
Papa Gèdé is a *bel*!

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* *Agoe*: exclamation, signifying "I am here."

776 787 793 796 He was the center of all eyes. Most of the time he danced alone, gyrating recklessly. Sometimes he danced with his houngénicon. Those who watched clapped hands and uttered sounds imitating drums, for drums were not being used in this service. The houngan carried the inevitable *clochette*, or tiny hand bell.

When newcomers arrived, Gèdé greeted them by shaking both their hands downward, vigorously, three times. Then he wiped their faces with his kerchief, a ceremony which he repeated from time to time. He [535] danced with each of them a kind of Jenvalo step, simple, restrained, and dignified. One of the visitors fell to his knees to converse with him.

The entire evening was built around the houngan's representation of Gèdé. Properly speaking, the houngan was not in a trance. He was in full possession of all his normal faculties and was conscious of the slightest inconveniences and disturbances. Several times the clay bowl of his pipe fell from the reed stem, scattering hot ashes on the ground, and each time he paused to allow the houngénicon to clear them away. Yet he was carried away by his certainty that he was Gèdé. The obvious conviction of those who watched seemed to fortify him in his role. As the evening wore on, he became more and more detached from his normal personality. His psychic condition was not that of one who had been "mounted" by a loa; it was, rather, a continuously progressive ecstasy.

776 761 Gèdé is, in fact, more than a loa of the cemetery; he is a personification of death in all its macabre, humorous, and unpredictable aspects. Death is not merely a thing dying; it is an entity, a positive force in nature. Death is Gèdé Nimbo. I believe that when the houngan became Gèdé, all who had crowded into his hut felt themselves to be in the presence of death itself. Death, a dynamic, aggressive force, danced and pirouetted among them, talking the language of the dead and of old Africa.

776 Gèdé is often stern, austere, and forbidding, but he has other aspects. Haitians take amused pleasure at the terror he can strike into the hearts of the mighty. An old Gèdé song goes:

[539] Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	He is dressed all in black
Pou'l monté au palais!	For he is going up to the palace!
L'habillé tout en blanc	When he's dressed all in white
Li semblé yon député!	He looks like a deputy!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	When he's dressed all in black
Li semblé yon sénateur!	He resembles a senator!

776 787 793 539 According to tradition, the song had its origin in a march on the capital by some houngans many years ago. The story is very old and no one remembers many of the details.

remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President 000
Louis Borno (1922–1930) there was a reënactment of the original march. 776
There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gèdé 785
mystères—houngans "possessed" by Gèdé Nimbo and attired in Gèdé 643
dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts 175
over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a huge, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gèdé's worst manners, the Gèdé mystères cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He sent the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gèdés marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

SERVICE FOR THE HOUNSI BOSSALE

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun 346
priest took place in the Bolosse section of Port-au-Prince. The hounfor was 796
situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it 987
were spacious. The hounfor itself was small and unpretentious, and except for the adjoining tonnelle would easily have been mistaken for
another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a 993
black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he neverthe- 993
less commanded solemn respect from the hounsi and the other partici- 996
pants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority. 987

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his asson and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the hounsi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other serviteurs brought from the hounfor a wooden washtub and set it on the ground

243 776 769 In the Artibonite Valley, where much rice is grown, a similar ceremony takes place before the rice is gathered from the fields. In this ceremony it is rice that is shared with the family ancestors, who have first rights, and with close friends who have aided with the planting. This feast is called [252] *mangé diri*, or sometimes *gouté diri*, the tasting of the rice. Small amounts of rice are taken from the fields, cooked with red beans or Congo beans, or perhaps made into dumplings. The farmer's friends and relatives gather [524] while the food is still cooking, and play games such as *awari* and *trois-arpt*. [538] The children play *gage* games and sing songs, and sometimes a *maît' conte*—a storyteller—comes to entertain them.

When the food is finally ready, the family ancestors are given their share. The farmer takes a calabash bowl of the rice and walks around the house grounds calling upon his immediate ancestors to accept their share. He drops a little food on the ground for the remembered dead, for the unknown dead who preceded them, for the Haitian dead, and for the dead of Africa. He also drops small portions for the dead twins, the dead albinos, the deformed dead, and the dead who have lost limbs, and for the distressed dead who have been improperly buried, or who may not have received the feasts that were due them. Afterward, he offers food to those who died of drowning, or who were lost at sea and never heard of again.

Each course is shared with the ancestors. The farmer takes a pitcher of water, spilling a little here and a little there until the dead have quenched their thirst. He also gives a little of everything to the family loa. Then the calabashes are set out on a bench or table reserved for the dead, and this food is not disturbed. Food for the marassa is set out separately on the ground in three small *coui*, or gourd dishes.

The family ancestors whose good will has made the harvest possible having been taken care of, the food is now shared among the extended family and the friends who helped in the fields. Later there are prayers [788] [776] [535] [524] to the loa, the saints, and God, led by the houngan or a *prêt' savane*. To finish the affair, there may be Juba-type dances for the older people, while the children watch or play *gage* games.

Only after this service are the farmer and his family and his *coumbite* (mutual labor group), if he belongs to one, free to go out and harvest the rice.[a]

243 243 776 769 171 These feasts of the rice and yam harvests are not of New World origin. Similar harvest festivals for yams or rice are held over a wide area of West Africa. There, as in Haiti, the fundamental concern is with the family ancestors, whose good will must be constantly nourished so that the rains continue to fall, the crops flourish, and human beings remain fertile. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, for example, the yam and rice harvests are

[a] [Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

celebrated with elaborate rituals for the dead. As in Haiti, great importance is laid on the presence of all living descendants, whose numbers are calculated to influence the ancestors' behavior. And as in Haiti, the first yams and the first rice are offered to the dead, and only after the family ritual does the family divide the crop.^{a} 763 764 776 769 171

SERVICE FOR THE ASSOTOR DRUM

The *assotor* drum is the largest and most sacred of all Haitian drums. Around it is built an impressive and elaborate service known as the *mangé assotor*, which, according to local traditions and circumstances, may be held as often as every three years or as infrequently as every twenty-one years. The period between mangés always consists of an odd number of years. A houngan from Jérémie declared the service might properly be held every three, five, or seven years. Another cult priest in the Cul-de-Sac Plain said it could be held every seven, seventeen, or twenty-one years. The assotor is known as the *plus grand moune* (the most venerable "man") of the hounfor. However, few cult centers possess an assotor. "Assotor c'est fort bagaille, c'est pas zaffai tout moune" (The assotor is powerful, it isn't everybody's affair), Haitians say. This is what a man from Jérémie tells about it: 534 776 778

"The assotor is the greatest of all things in the hounfor. The Rada drums are only for the Dahomey nation. The Congo drums are for the Congo nation. The assotor is a man of Dahomey, but he is for all nations. It is for all loa—Pétro, Congo, Bambara, Dahomey. The assotor belongs to Dahomey, but when there is a great service the assotor is the host to the loa of every rite, the loa of Haiti and of Africa. When the assotor is played, the loa are awakened everywhere. Loa who have been forgotten by the Creoles (Haitians) will come to the service and mount people, and when the loa have gone, many people don't know what loa has been riding them. Some ancient spirits from far away come only to the assotor service, and when it is over they aren't heard of again. 534 776 778 184 787 [776)

"The assotor drum is not for small things, it is for great occasions. For some people there are no occasions in their whole lives great enough for an assotor service. When all other things have failed, it is only then that the assotor is called upon. 534 776 778 787

"If a big houngan should have an assotor drum, he can have only one, and it is the chief of the hounfor. All other drums are its servants. You can make an assotor, but it is not necessarily an assotor. It may look like an assotor and not be an assotor. To be an assotor it must not only have the shape of an assotor but it must be accepted by the loa. There was a houngan near Jérémie who made an assotor and held a great service with it,

a [Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.
Cf. p. 351, category 116. — Analyst] [15]

534 796 778 787 but it wasn't a genuine assotor and the loa didn't come. The drummer beat the assotor, but none of the loa came. As he played, the stick kept falling out of his hand. This was a bad signal (omen). None of the people got loa in their heads. The houngan was in a great sweat, but nothing happened. Another houngan came after the third day and told him to bring the service to an end. He did that. They threw the false assotor away and no one would touch it.

534 796 776 782 787 [776] "To make an assotor, there is first a service. The houngan goes into the woods to find a great tree that is suitable. The trunk must be big enough so that the drum is at least as tall as a man. Most assotors are six feet high or more. The houngan must buy the tree from Maît' Grand Bois, the loa who is Master of the Forest. There is a service under the tree, a goat or a bull is killed, and the houngan places money on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. Then Maît' Grand Bois mounts his horses. He enters the head of the houngénicon or the laplace. Sometimes he rides the houngan himself. He is very rough with his horses. But if he accepts the money, the houngan has the tree cut down, and he has an assotor drum made. When the drum is finished, a special stick must be made to beat it. Again they go to the woods. They carry the great assotor drum with them. There is singing but no dancing or drumming. They find a tree from which they will cut the drumstick, and there is a service. The houngan must buy the branch from which the drumstick will be made. He offers money to Maît' Grand Bois, the same as before. He spills a little water on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. He holds a candle in his hand. They sing to Maît' Grand Bois to let them have the stick. Maît' Grand Bois is the master of all the trees, but he is thinking also of the other loa and how they feel about it. On the Island Below the Water he consults with them. If he agrees to give the stick, he makes it known by mounting some of the hounsi, or the houngan, or maybe the man who will be the special assotor drummer. Then they cut down the branch and make the drumstick.

534 796 776 "The assotor drum is not dedicated to Ogoun or Erzilie or any other single loa. If it is baptized, it is given its own name, Assotor. The spirit of the assotor is multiple, for it is the *rappel* for all loa everywhere. The spirit of the assotor is called Assotor, and it is a kind of loa, but it is not one loa but all loa.

534 796 778 776 "In the assotor service, all loa come. Ogoun, Damballa, Legba, Tijean Pétro, Dan Pétro, Ghédé, Maît' Cimitière, they all come. The big loa come and the little loa, the chiefs and their escortes. Every big loa has an escorte of twenty-one smaller loa. Some of the smaller loa have their own escortes. Damballa comes crawling like a snake. Makanda comes crawling like a snake. Ogoun comes fighting, chewing on nails or anything iron. Badé

comes quietly. Pié Cassé comes crawling because of his broken feet. Each 534
loa comes in his own way. 796

"First there is dancing for the Congo and Pétro loa. There is dancing for 778
the Kanga and Ibo nation. Last of all is Dahomé, for the assotor belongs 776
to the Dahomé nation, and Dahomé is the host. [184]

"The assotor service is the biggest of all services. It last fifteen days. Old [782]
people say that once there were services lasting more than twenty days. Every day, animals are killed—bulls, goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys—all according to the loa who are there to be fed. When Moundongue is fed, a dog's ears are clipped in his honor, because Moundongue is fond of dogs. More happens in the assotor mangé than all the rest of the year. Dahomé is host to the other nations, so the Rada service comes last. But the assotor drum is the host even to Dahomé, and it is fed last of all.

"The assotor drum is dressed in the finest of clothing and kerchiefs during the mangé. It is the king of everything.

"When the mangé assotor is ended, when the drum has been fed, there 534
is an immediate Mass held in church for the souls in purgatory. You don't 796
need to have any special reason, but you must hold the Mass for all the 769.
dead. You serve coffee, sandwiches, cake, and other refreshments for all the people.

"When there is no mangé going on, the assotor is kept in a special place 534
in the bounfor. Every seven or nine months the houngan has a special 778
rappel beaten for it on the Rada drums, and rum is spilled on the ground 796
for it. It is a great responsibility to own an assotor. But it does great things for the houngan who owns it."[6]

SERVICE FOR MAÎT' GRAND BOIS AT ANSE-À-VEAU

184.
Orthodox tradition in the region of Anse-à-Veau places the loa Maît' 776
Grand Bois as the most potent and venerable of deities. He is the supreme mystère, whose good will or eccentric whim determines the fortunes of all men. Somewhat subsidiary to Grand Bois, but served within the same rites, are two other non-Dahomé loa—Moundongue (of Congo origin) and Ibo. Older people of Anse-à-Veau regard this trilogy, along with Femme Grand Bois (the wife of Maît' Grand Bois), as the core of "Guinée" ritual. There is also a second group of deities, consisting primarily of Ogoun Feraille, Êzilie, and Fréda Dahomé; these loa are of the Dahomey family and are regarded as somewhat less important. Should services for any of them be held, they follow rites for the Grand Bois constellation. People in this region hold that there is only one Ibo loa, one Moundongue, one Ogoun, and one Êzilie, each of them with many names or manifestations. Legba, the Dahomean spirit of procreation,

[6][For footnote, see Category 116, p. 351.--Analyst]

184 772 the gate, and the crossroads, is not regarded in the same light as the other loa but as a messenger and interceder, and as the crossroads protector. He it is who helps in the placation of the major gods, and who guards people against accident, chance, and evil spirits on the highway.

796 782 786 In traditional form, services for Mait' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois are conducted by the family without the aid of a houngan, under the direction of the oldest male member of the family. The rites begin on a Thursday. With a tiny bell in his hand, the elder who directs the service (he is called *grand famille*) calls upon Mait' Grand Bois to come and receive his feast. The procedures are solemn. [789] The grand famille and the family sing. At last Grand Bois enters the head of the old man who is conducting the rites. Then the sacrificial animals are brought forward and killed, and the women take the meat and begin the cooking of the mangé. While the food is cooking, the family sits and waits. Sometimes the grand famille begins a song, in which others join. The cooking takes a long while. Sometime during the night, when the food is ready, it is placed in two baskets—one for Mait' Grand Bois and one for his wife, Femme Grand Bois. Into each basket goes meat, corn meal, rice, bread, cookies, peanut cakes, cassava, and other delicacies. The two baskets are hung by ropes from the roof of the tonnelle, or from the branch of a tree. During the entire night, none of the family eats. Mait' Grand Bois and his wife partake of the feast as they please. At six o'clock in the morning, the baskets are taken down, and the family is free to eat what the loa have left for them.

When the food is gone, the bones that are left are carried to a nearby stream and washed until they are white and shining. The bones are then placed in a large calabash bowl. Sweet-scented leaves from special trees are placed in the bowl with the bones, and water is added. [183] The mixture becomes a ritual lotion, or "bath." The entire family kneels before the liquid, which they rub on their faces, heads, arms, hands, legs, and feet. When the ritual bathing is over, they sing:

[539]

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Cérémonie là c'est fini! [Ex. 41]	The ceremony is finished!

Afterward, each member of the family places a small coin in the calabash dish with the bones and leaves, and the residue is then buried in a deep hole at a crossroads. [211] A heavy post (*borne*) is erected at the site, with markings to indicate the date of the service, and the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, each representing a year. Every year one of the numbers is checked off, and at the end of four years another service for Mait' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois is held.

If it should happen that on the appointed day four years later the 796
family is unable to hold the regular feast for Grand Bois, the grand 782
famille goes to the tree sacred to the loa, with a bottle of *siro'* and other 776
token gifts. He explains the difficulties of the family; he tells the loa [778]
that it has been a bad year, that the crops have been poor, and that the family has not been able to accumulate enough money to buy sacrificial animals. He asks Grand Bois for a six-month postponement. The loa [787]
agrees to the postponement, making his intentions clear through various signs when the grand famille is possessed. "Grand Bois is a good loa," people say, "but if you fail to meet your obligations to him he will be very stern. If you don't keep your promise to him, he may seize you [i.e., kill you]."

When the rites for Mait' Grand Bois are finished, services for Ogoun and the Dahomé deities may be held, beginning on Friday and running through the week end. The Ogoun service is a festive affair. There is much singing and dancing, and early on Saturday morning the sacrificial bull is dressed and decorated with red and blue kerchiefs. Red and blue ribbons are tied to his horns, and he is led on a grand tour to various places, including Ogoun's tree. The drummers walk behind [787]
him, and after them members of the family, some dancing, some singing, and some mounted by the loa Ogoun. The procession passes three times around the cemetery, then heads back toward the family *habitation*. When the participants reach the tree sacred to Legba, they sing to this loa, invoking him to "ouvri bayè pou' moin" (open the gate for me). Finally, when the procession reaches the *habitation*, the sacrificial bull is killed. After Ogoun has been served his mangé, the rites are terminated with an *action de grâce*.

Near Anse-à-Veau there is a dried-up spring. It is said that many 173-
years ago during a big service for Mait' Grand Bois a man mounted by 796
this loa rushed to the foot of a large tree and began clawing at the 776
ground. He dug a hole there with his hands, and when it was only 782
a few feet deep, water began to flow. The members of the société later [787]
enlarged the hole and lined it with stone. It was discovered that a giant crab was living in this water. One year, a service to Mait' Grand Bois was missed. The crab disappeared from the spring, and soon the water stopped flowing. "Grand Bois gives," the people say, "but if he is not remembered he also takes back."

POSSESSION BY THE LOA PINGA MAZA

On the outskirts of Port-au-Prince there is a *hounfor* dedicated to the 776
loa Pinga Maza, also known by the name Bakulu Baka. He is a ferocious [346]
and fearsome spirit of the Pétro family who is known for his propensity

776 [753] [728] [731] to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

346 353 794 778 The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

353 754 755 In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédition* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

793 755 Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frete cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his asson and bell and made a small vèvè on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

houngan took his place before the small altar and the cross surmounted 793
by the skull. Again he spoke *langage* and rattled his asson. He took 755
from the altar a small-necked bottle containing a white alcoholic liquid and a tight-fitting iron cross. The presence of the iron cross inside the bottle was represented as a magical phenomenon. The houngan took a mouthful of the white liquid and sprayed it out in a fine mist over the skull. Twice more he sprayed the mist, in different directions. Then he poured a little of the liquid directly on the skull. The room was filled with the smell of alcohol. The houngan lighted a candle and sat in a low chair facing the altar. He shook his asson rhythmically and spoke *langage* to Pinga Maza. Suddenly Pinga Maza entered the houn- 793
gan's head. The houngan became violent. He jerked this way and that, 755
making strange noises in his throat. He seized a machete from the altar, 787
waved it around, and struck the flat of it against his head. He continued for a while to beat his head fiercely with the machete. Gradually he became quiet. His assistants placed Pinga's red jacket on him. Now he spoke in the tired voice of an old man. He complained that he was hungry, that he had not eaten for a long while. His assistant handed him a
razor blade. He placed it in his mouth, chewed it up, and swallowed it, [789]
washing it down with more of the white liquid in the bottle. He asked for more, and they gave him a second blade to eat. He demanded a third, and ate that, too, spitting out small fragments of steel that caught in his teeth.

His assistant told him there was a man present seeking advice about a pouin. The possessed houngan looked around with half-closed eyes. He asked the man his name, and what he wanted. After hearing the client's story, the houngan took out a deck of cards and placed them one at a time, face up, on a winnowing tray. After studying the cards he said: "You are strong, but not strong enough. You already have some protections, but they do not protect you from the dangers coming your way. You have powerful enemies. You must have a new pouin." The man said yes, he wanted a new pouin, but how much would it cost? Pinga replied through the mouth of the houngan: "Twenty-five dollars." The man said: "I will get the money and return." He went out after placing five gourdes on the winnowing tray with the cards. Pinga became drowsy. The houngan's head fell forward on his chest and he slept. The divining session was ended.

THE WATER ROAD

The land where the loa live, the place "below the water," is not thought 776
of as being in the water itself. It is dry and airy, like the countryside 772
of Haiti. But the route to it is through water.

772 776 823 778 of Haiti. But the route to it is through water. When the Haitians say "under the water" they do not mean under the sea. The ocean is regarded as the special domain of Agwé, La Sirène, and a few related deities, but it has nothing to do with most loa. "Under the water" specifically means under the springs, the rivers, and the fresh-water lakes. Fresh water has the greatest of significance in relation to most of the Vodoun deities.

When a loa comes to visit his Haitian children he comes by way of the *chimin dleau* (the water road)—that is to say, by way of the river, the waterfall, or the spring. Because the spring is the primary source of fresh water, it is the most direct means of contact with the land of the loa. Tales are heard everywhere of persons who, drawing water from the spring at night, heard the voices of loa or the sound of singing and drumming coming up from somewhere below. And virtually all the tales about human beings who visited the land of the loa describe them as descending into a river or disappearing into a waterfall.

The loa are accustomed to traveling by the "water road." And in all aspects of the Vodoun service, this "water road" is refreshed and replenished. When the road is dry, contact with the loa is diminished. When it is moist, the loa travel easily.

776 782 823 778 Thus, the houngan constantly uses water to entice and invite the deities. He holds a glass or pitcher of water at the center pole of his peristyle. He extends it toward the four cardinal points. He spills water at the foot of the center pole. He spills water in the hounfor at the foot of the *pé*, or altar. He sets a pitcher of water at the gateway of his *habitation*. And often, during a service, he pours a pathway of water in the dust from his gateway into his peristyle. Within nearly [346] every hounfor there is at least one *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to the loa who is the *mait' caille*, the master of the house. These pools are carefully filled with water drawn from the springs. They are places of rest and refreshment for the deities whose names or portraits are inscribed on the walls above.

796 778 823 [468] [786] Sometimes rites and services are held at the site of the spring, the houngan and his entourage marching down to it from the hounfor for the occasion. So, too, there are annual pilgrimages to waterfalls such as Saut d'Eau, where the loa mount their "horses" in profusion.

782 796 823 778 Within the hounfor, during a service, the cult priest and the servitors pour "libations" of water on the earth, so that the loa may be refreshed. And virtually without end, the hounfor is the scene of ritual ceremonies in which the loa is bathed and thus "renewed" in the heads of his servitors.[3]

[3] [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351.--Analyst]

588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
776 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
[184] useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Ézilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Ézilie has special obligations to her for the duration of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to
[834] this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
755 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
793 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
776 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not
[953] be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
[777] fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gembo* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
[787] the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a *hounfor* or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

[P. 95]

6. Songs of the Peristyle

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The songs that are sung in the peristyle are virtually numberless and have a wide range of themes. In general, they are in the spirit of supplication or placation. Preponderantly they relate in some way to the deities. A loa may be described, invoked, or called upon to perform certain deeds. He may be cajoled, joked with, and even criticized. But it is all a family affair. The servitors and the *fidèles* are the loa's "children," his "horses," his "leaves in the woods." The loa, the spirits of the dead, and the living members of the cult are all members of the same "nation." Whether supplication or admonition, the songs of the peristyle and the hounfor all have an intimate character. The affairs of the loa are the affairs of the *société.* What concerns one individual concerns all. [769]

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The themes of the songs have to do with the drama of the cult ritual, the coming and going of the deities, sickness and death, the welfare of the dead, and the behavior of the living.

The cult service is a dramatic presentation which synchronizes and brings into sharp focus the heritage of religious and folk beliefs. The songs describe and evaluate what is going on. Sometimes they are cryptic and tangent, but to those participating and those watching they are clues. As the action is usually related and progressive, so are the songs. Each song has its own place and its own meaning. One song is not readily interchangeable with another. Each service has its appropriate music. So does each developing phase of the hounfor ritual.

Some of the songs are addressed to the loa; others seem to be the words of the loa themselves. In many of the songs there is an implicit dialogue between one or more loa and the singers. This dialogue is not rendered in a form which is immediately understandable to a stranger. There is a constantly shifting point of view, so that sometimes the words are third-person comments about the loa or the situation,

533 sometimes they are the words of the deity, sometimes words addressed
794 to the deity. The name of the loa may appear anywhere in the song, as
796 both an invocational word and a rhythmic device, with the result that
● 796 unless one is aware of the song structure he may lose the sense and
533 intent of the words. In these two lines, for example:

539 Master Agwé comes from the sea,
531 My cannon is loaded.

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796 The first line describes what happens, from the standpoint of a third person; the second line is a statement by the loa Agwé. Or, take this single line:

Marie Louise oh, we are mixed up!

Here Marie Louise seems to be the person addressed, but in fact it is Marie Louise who is talking. Again:

I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun!

It is not Ogoun who is addressed; the words are his own.

As in nonreligious songs, there is a pattern stanza which is repeated over and over again. As the song goes on, there may be variations for interest and certain embellishments, but by and large the form remains constant. In religious singing there are relatively few examples of songs which progress from one idea to another. When the theme has been stated, that is the song.

533 One of the preliminary songs in many ritual services is a greeting to
539 the men and women of the société who are present. It is an *achan*, or
531 salute of welcome, and comes before the loa themselves are addressed:
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Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nou!	I ask you!
Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nou	I ask you
Qui gens nous yé! [Ex. 42]	What people are we?

The answer to the question is implicit, for they are the people of the société, members of the Arada "nation" or Anago "nation," as the case may be.

782 In almost any service of the Dahomey "nation" the *first* supplicatory
796 song is addressed to Legba, the keeper of the gate, the guardian of the
533 crossroads, and the "go-between" who intercedes with other loa in the
794 affairs of men. The *first* appeal to Legba is to open the gate, over which
he is master, so that the voices of supplication may be heard and understood. The open gate also provides access for other loa to the service.

Attibon Legba ouvri bayé pou' moin agoé!
Ou wè Attibon Legba ouvri bayé pou' moin ouvri bayé!
M'apé entré quand ma tourné,
Ma salue loa yo!

Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, agoé!
You see, Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, open the gate!
I will enter when I return,
I salute the loa!

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After this appeal, or sometimes while it is being sung, the houngan spills a little water on the earth at the base of the po'teau mitan. It is an inducement for the loa to "enter," for the loa reside "below the water" and their passage into the hounfor is made easier by water. The houngan may spill his water in a long path from the entrance of the peristyle to the po'teau mitan, or extend his pitcher invitingly to the four points of the compass. Then, perhaps, another song is sung to Legba:

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[778]

Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Ou même qui porté drapeau,
C'est ou même ka paré soleil pou' loa yo!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
You who carry the flag,
It is you who shade the loa from the sun!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

As the ritual gets under way, there may be a general song of welcome to all the loa of the cult, such as this one:

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Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Oh bonjou' oh bonjou' loa moin! [Ex. 43]

Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Oh, good day, oh, good day my loa!

When the service is well in progress, the songs may describe the qualities of the deities—their character, behavior and needs. If it is Balindjo, for example, the song may advertise that persons with this loa in their heads are immune to poison:

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun ahi!

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, ahi!

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Ogoun Balindjo,	Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!	Oh, Ogoun, oh!
C'est pas mangé mangé	There is no poisoned food
Pou'l tuyé cheval moin! [Ex. 44]	That will kill my horse!

Ogoun Fai, known also by the Christian name St. Jacques, is the deity of war, and this song describes his courage and valor:

St. Jacques Majeur a voyé di'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques oh voyé di'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques Majeur a voyé di'm ga'çon la-gué!
St. Jacques oh voyé di'm ga'çon la-gué! [Ex. 45]

Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is already a man!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is already a man!
Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is a man of war!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is a man of war!

Should the service be to the loa Damballa Wédo, symbolized as a rainbow and a great serpent, this song might be sung, commenting that he cannot be drowned in the water:

Papa Damballa ou c'est couleuvre oh!
Pouq'ou pas néyé?
Pouq'ou pas néyé?
Damballa pouq'ou pas néyé nan dleau? [Ex. 46]

Papa Damballa you are a snake, oh!
Why don't you drown?
Why don't you drown?
Damballa, why don't you drown in the water?

[998] [823] [532] [231] Damballa, the rainbow, is in fact the source of the water that bubbles from the earth in springs. He is a patron of the spring, and there he often lives in the form of a water snake. In many a hounfor where Damballa is specially revered there is a *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to him. On the wall behind the pool there is usually a painting of Damballa and Ayida, depicted as great serpents, sometimes with a feathered headdress. The pool is kept filled with fresh water from the spring, and here one or more small snakes—symbols of Damballa and Ayida—reside:

Ala loa marché nan dleau
C'est Damballa!
Ala loa marché nan dleau
C'est Damballa!
Papa Damballa c'est tête à dleau!
Papa Damballa c'est tête à dleau!

There is a loa who lives in the water,
It is Damballa!

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There is a loa who lives in the water,
It is Damballa!
Papa Damballa is the spring!
Papa Damballa is the spring!

Ayida Wèdo, another aspect of Damballa, is also known as a snake and a rainbow. A song describing Ayida's attributes goes:

Ayida c'est arc-en-ciel oh!	Ayida is a rainbow, oh!
On ap' vini' lui couleuvre!	You will come in like a snake!
Ayida c'est arc-en-ciel!	Ayida is a rainbow!
Pas wè n'ap lui couleuvre? [Ex. 47]	Don't you see I come in as a snake?

Agwé Woyo, one of the major deities of the sea, is believed to be responsible for thunder over the ocean, which is described as the sound of his cannon shooting:

Mait' Agwé so'ti nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé-é!
Mait' Agwé so'ti nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé!
Mait' Agwé so'ti nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé oh!
Canon'm chargé pou'm tiré Mait' A'Woyo! [Ex. 48]

Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded, oh!
My cannon is loaded to fire, Master Agwé Woyo!

The loa Kitta, or Simbi Kitta, of the Guinée pantheon is one of the water deities. He is described as coming out of the water dripping wet:

Kitta oh so'ti nan dleau li tou' mouillé!
Oh Kitta oh so'ti nan dleau li tou' mouillé!
Oh Kitta so'ti nan dleau li tou' mouillé!
Oh nan point houngan passé Bondieu nan pays-ci! [Ex. 37]

Kitta, oh, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitta, oh, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Tijean Pétro of the Pétro "nation" is small, and agile even though he has only one foot. (Some people say that Tijean Petro has no feet at all.) This somewhat malevolent deity hides in the leaves of the coconut palm, and from there he sometimes preys on passers-by, particularly children. Persons mounted by Tijean Pétro may move about as though they have no feet and climb into the nearest palm tree. [787]

they have no feet and climb into the nearest palm tree. This song comments on Tijean's ability to climb with his single foot. (Haitians do not "shinny" up trees, but walk up, bracing the soles of the feet against the trunk.)

Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,	Tijean, you have no feet,
Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,	Tijean, you have no feet,
Comment ou fai monté cocoyé?	How do you climb the coconut tree?
Lans lapé ou Legba, Jean Pétro,	By using Legba's gun, Jean Pétro,
Lans lapé oh!	By using the gun!

When the loa begin to arrive in the houmfor to participate in the ceremonies, there is usually a song taking note of their coming. Sometimes the words describing the action are the deity's own account of what is happening, as in this song to the loa Sobo:

C'est passé m'ap passé là!
C'est passé moi passé là!
Ê hounsi houmfo é yo konnain nom moin!
Yo konnain nom moin yo konnain nom moin!
Yo rélé hounsi kanzo!
Yo rélé Dahomey!
Yo rélé moin! [Ex. 50]

I am passing through, I am passing through!
I am passing, I am passing here!
Ê, the hounsi houmfo call my name!
They are calling for me, they are calling for me!
The hounsi kanzo are calling!
Dahomey is calling!
They are calling me!

In another rite one might hear this song about the arrival of the deity Simbo, from the point of view of the servitors rather than of the loa:

Simbo Kita vini wè moin, oh!
Oh Simbo va vini wè moin là, oh saints yè! [Ex. 51]

Simbo Kita comes to see me, oh!
Oh, Simbo will come to see me here, oh saints!

When the deity Boulicha Nago comes in, there is a call for the drums to be played:

Nago 'rivé-é,	Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!	Boulicha Nago arrives!
Nago 'rivé-é,	Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!	Boulicha Nago arrives!
Li lè li tempe bate li!	It is time, beat the drums!
Li lè li tempe bate li!	It is time, beat the drums!
Nago 'rivé jodi-a, oh enhé! [Ex. 52]	Nago comes today, oh, *enhé!*

Sobo, too, demands his drums as he arrives, as well as all the other paraphernalia for his ritual: 533 532 776 794 776

Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé hounsi 'Llada!	Sobo asks for his Allada hounsi!
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé tambou' Rada!	Sobo asks for his Arada drums!
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé pouin Allada!	Sobo asks for his Allada magic!
Coté yo coté yo? [Ex. 53]	Where are they, where are they?

When more than one loa comes into the service at the same time there is confusion. Each loa is supposed to await his turn, so that the ritual and the dance may be conducted in an orderly way. Sometimes, however, two or more deities come in at once, throwing the orderly process out of gear. This song takes note of the simultaneous arrival of the loa Adja, Loko, Sobo, Sedje, and others.

Adja nou mêlé, oh Adja oh!
Adja nou mêlé!
Nou mêlé Papa Loko, nou mêlé jodi-à!

Adja nou mêlé, oh Adja oh!
Adja nou mêlé!
Nou mêlé Sedje assez nou mêlé jodi-à!

Adja nou mêlé, oh Adja oh!
Adja nou mêlé!
Nou mêlé bilé ouèlé Nèg' Sobo nou mêlé jodi-à! [Ex. 54]

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Papa Loko, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Sedje, enough, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed all the time, Nèg' Sobo, we are mixed up today!

When the loa come in en masse this way, some are asked to retire so that the service can proceed smoothly. In a similar instance, the deity Marie Louise is willing to withdraw from the scene but demands that a present or sacrifice be given to her first. [782]

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Marie Louise oh nous mêlé!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Marie Louise oh nous mêlé!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Cad' ça ou ba moin pou'm allé?	Where is my gift so that I can go?

Often, when it is time to leave the service, the deity announces through the medium of the song that he has other affairs to attend to elsewhere. Ogoun Achadé, for example, makes a swift departure:

Ogoun volé!	Ogoun flies!
Aaago!	Aaago!
Ogoun volé Achadé!	Ogoun flies Achadé!
Aaago Papa! [Ex. 55]	Aaago Papa!

As the deity Général Brisé departs, he tells his servitors that he is "going to God," and that he turns responsibility for their affairs over to them:

Général Brisé peyi ya nan main oh!
Agoé! Agoé-é!
Général Brisé peyi ya nan main oh!
Peyi ya nan main
M'pral Bondieu djab oh! [Ex. 56]

General Brisé, the country is in your hands, oh!
Agoé! Agoé-é!
General Brisé, the country is in your hands, oh!
The country is in your hands,
I am going to God, oh!

The loa Bumba, in reply to a query, declares that he must go because he has work to do in his fields:

Bumba qui coté pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui coté pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui coté pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui coté pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
M'planté manga!	I am planting mangoes!
Planté patate!	Planting potatoes!
Planté jowmou!	Planting pumpkins!
Planté banane!	Planting plantains!
Wailla Bumba qui coté pralé? [Ex. 57]	*Wailla* Bumba, where are you going?

The deities Mait' Bois and Mait' Dleau declare as they depart that they are on their way to Africa, and leave the impression that things are pretty nice over there:

Mait' Dleau qui so'ti nans dleau!	Mait' Dleau who comes out of the water!
Mait' Bois qui so'ti nans bois!	Mait' Bois who comes out of the woods!
Nan Guinée plaisi-à belle oh!	In Africa pleasure is beautiful, oh!
A n'allé wè yo! [Ex. 58]	We are going to see!

As the loa Mambo Ayida of the Guinée pantheon leaves the hounfor to return to Africa, her "children" ask her not to stay there too long. And they ask her to bring back to Haiti with her some good magic for use in the hounfor:

Mambo Ayida é!
Pral nan Guinée-à, pinga ou misé-à m'tendé!
Si ou jwinn bon ouanga wa po'té!
Si ou jwinn bon batim wa po'té! [Ex. 59]

Mambo Ayida é!
Go to *Africa*, take care not to stay, I am waiting!
If you find a good ouanga, bring it!
If you find a good batim, bring it!

Giving food to the loa is a focal point in religious rituals. Many songs describe the sacrifice, signify that the loa are waiting for their food, or otherwise dramatize this significant activity. In the following song the deity Damballa asks for the goat with which he is to be fed.

Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-é!
Damballa mandé tête cabrit,
C'est sang li mandé!
Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-é!
Damballa mandé tête cabrit,
C'est sang li mandé!
Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang li mandé!
Oh assez! [Ex. 60]

Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood é!
Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
It is blood he asks for!
Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood é!
Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
It is blood he asks for!
Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood he asks for!
Oh, enough!

For Ogoun they sometimes sing:

Papa Ogoun qui gain' yun mangé
Tout moune pas mangé li!
Enhé enhé, oh! [Ex. 61]

It is Papa Ogoun who has a feast,
Not everyone may eat it!
Enhé enhé, oh!

But sometimes Ogoun is dissatisfied that there is no feast ready for him, and he complains.

533 Ogoun é oh moin blessé!	Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
534 Ogoun é oh moin blessé!	Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
537 A pas m'blessé Fouti,	Now I am hurt, Fouti,
976 M'pas wè sang moin!	I don't see my blood!
982 M'pas wè sang'm Mèt Ogoun,	I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun,
984 Moin pas wè sang moin!	I don't see my blood!
986 M'pas wè sang'm Badagry,	I don't see my blood, Badagry
Moin pas wè sang moin li! [Ex. 62]	I don't see my blood here!

The loa Moundongue, like Damballa, likes goat meat, and it can be cooked in two ways:

Yè yè yè!
Moundongue oh!
Oh Moundongue oh yè yè yè!
Moundongue mangé cabrit bouilli,
Moundongue mangé cabrit boucané! [Ex. 63]

Yè yè yè!
Moundongue, oh!
Oh, Moundongue, oh, yè yè yè!
Moundongue eats boiled goat,
Moundongue eats roasted goat!

Or again, the servitors may sing:

Cote posé ou ba'ou mangé, oh Ti Moundongue oh!
Cote posé ou ba'ou mangé, Moundongue oh! [Ex. 64]

Wherever you are, we give you food, oh, Ti Moundongue there!
Wherever you are, we give you food, Moundongue there!

[980] [18] [781] The loa Adja also has animal sacrifices and special dishes for his mangé, but sometimes he—and the "horses" he mounts—will eat broken glass:

Oh Adja mangé bounda damijan!
Adja vieu' vieu'!
Adja mangé bounda damijan!
Adja vieu' vieu'! [Ex. 65]

Oh, Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!
Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!

For the loa Ianman Ibo the proper sacrifice is a rooster, and the deity declares:

Nanchon Ibo m'ap mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Nanchon Ibo m'ap mangé gros coq!
Nanchon Ibo m'ap mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Waille waille waille! [Ex. 66]

Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, eh, Ibo nation!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, eh, Ibo nation!
Wanile wanile wanile!

[illegible]
[184]

The Ibo service is often a strictly family affair rather than a broad community ritual. The family replies to the Ibo loa in the following song.

La famille vini' peyé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Vini' peyé sang!	Comes to pay blood!
La famille vini' peyé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Ibo Lazile volonté!! [Ex. 47]	It is Ibo Lazile's wish!

The loa Nago frankly tells the people that if they want to come to his house (his shrine, or the hounfor) they will have to pay something for the privilege:

Si ou wè caille'm demeuré,	If you see where I live,
Si ou wè caille'm demeuré,	If you see where I live,
Fo'ou peyé bonbon pou' ça!	You have to give cookies for that!
Ainago Nago!	Ainago Nago!
Vini' wè caille'm demeuré! [Ex. 49]	Come see where I live!

The "dead" spirit Ghédé Nimbo, the guardian or master of the cemetery, who often engages in bizarre activities which poke fun at the codes of social behavior, is sometimes regarded as a special protector of children. Precisely because he is overlord of all that has to do with the grave, his good will is sought, particularly in behalf of the young; and in many services of the Nago rites his protection is bought by money gifts:

[illegible]

Ghédé main la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!

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Ghédé, take the money,
I will give you money, money,
I will give you money to guard the children!
I will give you money to guard the children!

In the course of the ceremonies when, from time to time, the honored loa of the occasion enters into the head of one of the servitors, the houngan will place in the hands of the mounted person a lighted candle and a pitcher of water. The possessed servitor approaches the sacred center post and spills a little water on the ground for the deity. After certain other rituals, the houngan, or one of his assistants, conducts the mounted "horse" into the hounfor to the altar. In the following song, as the possession comes on, there is a call for a lighted candle.

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Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi djab non wè!
Oh Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi wa limé chandelle pou' clairé moin! [Ex. 68]

Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Stern Simbi doesn't see!
Oh, Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi [says] you will light the candle so I can see!

Some of the songs refer to the dancing of the loa who enter the bodies of the servitors. The deity Loko asks for his hounsi, through whom he will dance:

Coté pitits moin yo,
Mainnin'm nan hounfor, m'ap djaillé!
Na pas Loko,
Coté pitits moin yo! [Ex. 69]

Where are my children,
Take me into the hounfor, I will *djaillé!*
Now, Loko,
Where are my children!

796 Another deity, who is not expressly named, tells his "leaves in the
794 woods"—that is, his hounsi—that he has danced since he was a child:

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Fé nan bois hélé moin!	Leaves in the woods call me!
Oh dépi'm pitit m'ap dansé!	Oh, since I was small I have danced!
Fé nan bois hé-é!	Leaves in the woods *hé-é!*
Fé nan bois hélé moin oh!	Leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Oh fé nan bois hélé moin oh!	Oh, leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Dépi'm pitit m'ap dansé!	Since I was small I have danced!
Fé nan bois hélé moin! [Ex. 70]	Leaves in the woods call me!

In the following song the loa Macaya Bumba is called upon by the hounsi to hurry up and get on with his dancing.

Macaya Bumba Bumba!	Macaya Bumba Bumba!
Lèvé dansé!	Get up and dance!
Macaya Bumba!	Macaya Bumba!
Bumba mon cher vini dansé! [Ex. 71]	Bumba my dear, come and dance!

A song for the deity Ianman in the course of the Ibo dancing and ritual goes:

Ibo lélé!
Ibo lélé!
Nanchon Ibo ça ou gaignin con ça Ibo lélé!

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Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm dansé Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm dansé Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman *é-wa é-wa é-wa*! [Ex. 72]

Ibo *lélé*!
Ibo *lélé*!
Ibo Nation, what are you doing there, Ibo *lélé*!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman *é-wa é-wa é-wa*!

Another song containing the same zestful appreciation of dancing is for the loa Kitta. The words "my mother isn't dead" and "my father isn't dead" are simply expressions of good fortune and happiness which embellish the command to do the Kitta steps:

Ai ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Manman pas mouri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

M'dit pitit ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Papa pas mouri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta! [Ex. 73]

Ai, little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My mother is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

I say little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My father is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps![1]

A song for the loa Bambarra describes the movements of his dance. Bambarra is symbolized by the crab, and the dance posture with "low hips" is regarded as characteristic of the crab's movements: [535]

Bambarra kap promnad, taille bas!
Bambarra allé promnad, taille bas!

[1] [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351.--Analyst]

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Bambarra is walking, low hips!
Bambarra is going to walk, low hips!

Damballa Wèdo, being a snake deity, "threads" or "winds" his way like a serpent, and this song describes a serpentine course taken by the dancers as Damballa (here identified as a Nago man) arrives:

Filé na filé, Damballa Wèdo vini wè moin!
Filé na filé, Nèg' Nago vini wè'm là! [Ex. 74]

Wind, we wind, Damballa Wèdo comes to see me!
Wind, we wind, the Nago man comes to see me here!

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After the dancing has been going on for a long while and the pace is fast, there may be a song of banter, such as the following from the Dahomey rites. The dancers sing *laillé, laillé!*, describing a figure of the dance in which the skirts are swirled, and note that they have worn out the drummers. They even offer to carry on their backs those dancers who are ready to fall by the wayside:

Laillé laillé!
Oh laillé laillé oh viéco'!
Tambouyé bouké!
Tambouyé bouké viéco'!
Laillé laillé oh viéco'!
Laillé laillé tambouyé bouké houngan'm!
M'pò'té sou corps moin vié sor!
Tambouyé bouké ça!
Laillé laillé! [Ex. 75]

Laillé laillé!
Oh, *laillé laillé*, oh, old people!
The drummers are tired!
The drummers are tired, old people!
Laillé laillé, oh, old people!
Laillé laillé, the drummers are tired, my *houngan!*
I'll carry you on my back, old sister!
The drummers are tired there!
Laillé laillé!

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Interspersed among the songs of the hounfor there are sometimes warnings or admonitions. Usually they are tangent and indirect in statement, and may be from the point of view of the loa or of the houngan. In the following pouin song, which accompanies the ritual of making magic, there is a warning to certain people who will feel the effects of the magic. The ceremony includes, among other things, the dropping of lemons, roots, and leaves by the houngan into his sacred basin or pond. The houngan sings:

Trois fé trois citron oh! 533
Trois fé trois citron oh! 539
Moin dit *rwo*, youn jour ou wa besoin moin! 776 ●
Trois fé trois racine oh! 626
Moin dit oui, youn jour ou wa besoin moin! 796
Gainyain bassin moin trois racine tombé ladans, 993
Quand ou wa' blié fou' ramané chongé! [Ex. 76]

Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
I say *rwo*, one day you are going to need me!
Three leaves, three roots, oh!
I say yes, one day you are going to need me!
I have my pond into which three roots fall,
When you wish to forget you will have to remember!

In another song the houngan warns against ingratitude on the part of persons for whom special magical services have been carried out:

Ouanga ça oh ouanga chaud!
Ouanga ça ouanga chaud!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou faché!
Ou mandé'm ouanga là ou content!
Ou mandé'm ouanga là ou content!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou faché! [Ex. 77]

This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!

Somberly and in metaphor, the deity Kitta Démambré speaks of an unhappy event which occurred in the town of Léogane, and warns those concerned that it must not happen again: 533 539 776 626

Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça 'core oh!
Nan Léogane ti poule-là mouri nan zé!
Nan Léogane ti poule-là mouri nan zé oh!
Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça encore oh! [Ex. 78]

Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again, oh!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again!

An unnamed spirit warns that the moment for placation has come and suggests that calling on him after he has gone from the *pavillon* of the houngan Deréa would be of no use. [782]

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M'apé rélé moin en bas pavillon loa moin!
Laissé'm démélé moin en bas pavillon oh Deréa!
Jou'm allé pinga you lommain nom moin! [Ex. 79]

I will call, I am under the loa's canopy!
Let me get straightened out under Deréa's canopy!
The day I am gone take care they do not call my name!

In a lighter vein, to the gayest of music, there is this admonition that a wrong cannot be righted simply by saying "excuse me":

Ibo lélé!
Ibo lélé!
Pilé pied'm ou mandé'm pardon!
Pilé pied'm ou mandé'm pardon!
Ça pardon-là wa fait pou' moin? [Ex. 80]

Ibo *lélé!*
Ibo *lélé!*
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
The pardon, what good will it do me?

And the deity Ogoun Kénison warns those who do not speak of him with respect that he is not ready to accept such a slight as a light matter.

Ogoun Yèkkè Yèkkè ça Nèg' Kénison é!
Ogoun Yèkkè ça Nèg' Kénison é!
Oh tous les jours c'est pa'lé Ogoun mal!
Ogoun pas conn' betisé! [Ex. 81]

Ogoun Yèkkè Yèkkè there, man of Kénison!
Ogoun Yèkkè there, man of Kénison!
Oh, constantly talking bad about Ogoun!
Ogoun doesn't like joking!

The loa Ogoun Panama, like ordinary mortals, is concerned about people who "come to look and go away to talk."

Ogoun oh m' c'est Nèg' Panama é!
Ogoun oh m' c'est Nèg' Panama é!
Yo vini ga'dé!
Yo vini pa'lé!
Oh Ogoun oh m' c'est Nèg' Panama é! [Ex. 82]

Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man *é!*
Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man *é!*
They come to look!
They come to look!
Oh, Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man *é!*

The loa Aïson complains more vigorously of the bad behavior of human beings: 533 539 776 626

Aïson Aïson!
Dipis temps y'ap pa'lé sou moin!
Coté ça yo gainyain?
Bouche à yo paya paya!
Djaule à yo pènè pènè!
Coté ça pou' yo pa'don oh? [Ex. 83]

Aïson, Aïson!
For a long time they have been talking about me!
What's wrong with them?
Their mouths go *paya paya!*
Their jaws go *pènè pènè!*
What is the excuse?

Even on routine business the loa are inclined to be petulant, or to protest that they have been mistreated, that their followers gossip about them, or that they are not ardent enough. Here the deity Simbi en des Eaux complains bitterly that she is not loved by her servitors, the "leaves in the woods," and asks a hounsi named Lolo for news to take to spirits of the ancestors who live "below the water": 533 539 776 626 794

Fé nan bois con ça nou yé!
Nen point raimain pas mandé quitté!
Fé nan bois con ça nou yé!
Nen point raimain pas mandé quitté!
Simbi en des Eaux,
Qui sorti en bas dleau!
Gardé ça yo fai moin!
M'dit Lolo, ba moin nouvelle pou'm ba yo! [Ex. 84]

Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
There is no love that does not ask to end!
Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
There is no love that does not ask to end!
Simbi en des Eaux,
Who comes from below the water!
See what they do to me!
I say, Lolo, give me the news to give them!

But if the loa complain about the behavior of their followers, the servitors also may complain. Songs sung in the hounfor may chide the deities for antisocial deeds, for forgetting their "children," or for carelessness. In the following song the spirit Malt' Grand Chimin is criticized for mounting his "horses" with such fury that they are thrown about 533 539 776 794 787 782

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776 violently. The hounsi complain that Malt' Grand Chimin treats them
782 as though they were flour being ground in a mill:
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Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Papa m'pas maïs moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin!
Papa m'pas maïs moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin! [Ex. 85]

Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!

533
539 When there is sickness within the société there may be songs for the
794 absent ones. Here is a song for an ailing hounsi:
755

Moin allé wè là, hounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè ça, hounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè houngan, hounsi malade oh! [Ex. 86]

I am going to see there, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see it, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see, houngan, the hounsi is sick, oh!

Again, the members of the société call upon Ogoun, or St. Jacques, to help one of their number who is sick:

St. Jacques marré chwal li,	St. Jacques ties his horse,
Li pas dit personne oh,	He tells no one, oh,
Véyé li pou' moin!	Take care of him for me!
Li met gainyain verre,	He may have worms,
Li met gainyain maline nan dos,	He may have sores on his back,
St. Jacques oh!	St. Jacques, oh!
Ba li lavie pou' moin! [Ex. 87]	Protect him for me!

796 Ogoun is the dispenser of rum, and in virtually all Ogoun rituals rum
776 is at some time or another in evidence. Sometimes rum is poured into a hot
273 iron pot and bursts into flame. The iron pot is described as Ogoun's

house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogoun is the master of fire: 796 776 273

Pierre, Pierre Narcisse oh!	Pierre, Pierre Narcisse, oh!
Yago moula-é!	*Yago moula-é!*
Caille Ogoun boulé!	Ogoun's house is burning!
Guildive Ogoun bel O!	Ogoun's distillery is beautiful!
Na consolé! [Ex. 88]	We console ourselves!

[539] [533]

Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is this one to the loa Atti Daï, from the Dahomey service: 533 539 776 [178]

Atti Daï oh!	Atti Daï, oh!
Yo voyé dit moin	They sent to tell me
Min soleil malade! *	The sun was sick!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
C'est regrettant ça	What grief it was
Pou'm enterré soleil! [Ex.89]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Ézilie. It shows clear evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Ézilie Fréda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yagaza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another. [177]

Ézilie Nainain oh!
Ézilie Nainain oh!
Ézilie oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Ézilie n'ap marché n'ap couté n'ap parlé pou' temps y'ap parlé parole moin!
Ézilie n'ap marché n'ap couté pou' temps y'ap parlé parole mwé!
Ézilie Nainain oh!
Ézilie Fréda oh Nainain oh!
Ézilie Fréda oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Mesdames nà yo chita nan caille là yo vlé djaillé oh tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Mesdames yo passé ya tombé té à genoux y'apé plaindre le sort yo!

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* Some Haitian informants insisted that *soleil* meant "sun." Others felt that this word in the song was really Solé, a diminutive of Attisolé, another name for Atti Daï. [114] [115]

533 Ézilie Nainain oh!
539 Ézilie Nainain oh!
776 Ézilie oh bo' c'est moin Yagaza!

Larouzé fai banda tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Larouzé fai banda tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Ézilie Nainain oh!
Ézilie Nainain oh!
Ézilie Fréda oh, coté moin bo' Yagaza!

Ézilie Fréda Nèg' Sobo Nèg' Grand Chimin Nèg' Balairouzé Cercléquitté abobo ça!
Ézilie Nainain oh!
Ézilie Nainain oh!
Ézilie Fréda coté ou yé? Moin là Yagaza! [Ex. 90]

Grandmother Ézilie, oh!
Grandmother Ézilie, oh!
It is I Ézilie, Yagaza!

Ézilie we are walking, we are listening, we are speaking, they are speaking my words now!
Ézilie we are walking, we are listening, they are speaking my words now!
Grandmother Ézilie, oh!
Ézilie Fréda, oh, Grandmother, oh!
Ézilie Fréda, oh, it is I, Yagaza!

The women sitting in the house there, they want to have a good time, oh, until the sun comes up!
The women go by, they fall on the earth on their knees, they complain about their troubles!
Grandmother Ézilie, oh!
Grandmother Ézilie, oh!
Ézilie, oh, it is I on Yagaza side!

The dew glistens until the sun comes up!
The dew glistens until the sun comes up!
Grandmother Ézilie, oh!
Grandmother Ézilie, oh!
Ézilie Fréda, oh, I am on Yagaza side!

Ézilie Fréda, Nèg' Sobo, Nèg' Grand Chimin, Nèg' Balairouzé, Cercléquitté, finish there! *
Grandmother Ézilie, oh!
Grandmother Ézilie, oh!
Ézilie Fréda, where are you? I am on Yagaza side!

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* These various loa are being called upon here to withdraw and not to intrude upon the scene while Ézilie is present.

[P. 95]

7. In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts

It is said by many Haitians that the loa are inclined to shun the mapou 796
tree, for it is the secret rendezvous of countless kinds of demons. On 778
certain nights, they say, you may see a chink of light showing through 824
the trunk of the great mapou, indicating that the demons are in macabre session.

Sometimes it is the baka who meet there to feast and discuss their blood-curdling plans. The baka are described as small and evil creatures, human in form, with red eyes, and legs or arms covered with skin but no flesh. They change into animals at will and may roam the countryside as cats, dogs, or cattle. The baka are notorious sorcerers, and they perform only malevolent acts. They are reputed to "eat people," literally as well as figuratively. Stories are heard of such-and-such a man or child who disappeared and was presumed to have been eaten at a feast in the mapou tree. One man who passed a mapou in the dark of night reported that he heard muffled singing coming from within its trunk, accompanied by the pounding of mortars in which a gruesome feast was being pulverized. But the baka "eat" people also in the sense that they 776
destroy them. It is said sometimes that a person with a withered arm or [732]
leg has been "eaten" by a baka. Perhaps he was an innocent victim; possibly he struck a horse or dog which was really a baka; or perhaps he simply brushed against a baka in the market place. Sometimes the baka directs his evil in the most indiscriminate sort of way, "eating" whatever human being he meets. Animals which behave strangely are 776
suspected of being baka in disguise, and they are given wide berth. 825

A cow once found within an old brick-covered spring was taken to be a baka because no cow could have passed through the small doorway of the spring. It was assumed that she had entered as a small baka and had then changed to her animal form. The spring went unused for days, until some children reported that the baka had vanished. The cow was

The cow was

● 776 never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the
825 spring the people again drew water from it.

[783] Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one
[493] ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle,
which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince
to Léogane.

776 Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the
789 most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or
824 monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has
magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well.
When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never
mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing,
for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing
all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material
for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long
journey into strange country may carry a cococmacaque stick with him
to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange
animals that may be baka in disguise.

776 In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always
789 random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a
754 man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

184 In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the
776 ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called
778 Bakulu Baka, or Babaku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats"
people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou
tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

776 The *engagements,* or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are
789 usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab,* or devil. A djab
789 is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some
675 djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque.
They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for
human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask
for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price.
Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having
entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

538 One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum
776 of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou
789 Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required,
789 but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of
675 his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when
the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

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Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

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Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

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The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

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Conduit'm allé oh!
Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourban!
Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 91]

Take me, oh!
Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

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775 having died a virgin. The *lutin* is the spirit of a child who died before baptism.[1] The *revenant* is a spirit of a dead person who feels he has been mistreated, and who returns to the world of the living to plague their families or their enemies.

● 776 The *lou-garo* (*loup-garou*) is a being of another kind, a vampire. She
754 is human in form but sheds her skin and assumes animal forms at night when she roams the countryside seeking a victim. Salt is her nemesis. Should her human skin be found and salt sprinkled inside it, she would not be able to put it back on and would be destroyed.

776 A special form of the lou-garo is the *bizango,* a kind of enormous
778 dog that runs in packs at night seeking people to eat. Also related to the lou-garo is the *démon,* a male creature of amorphous personality and character who can convert himself into an animal at will. There are sociétés of démons which, like those of the baka, meet in the dark of night in their assembly hall inside the mapou tree. Haitians who are conversant with such matters agree that there are many such trees, but that the most notorious of them are Mapou Miteppe in Miragoane, Mapou Simon in Aux Cayes, and Mapou Danpisse at Léogane.

Other fearsome beings such as the *zeaubeaups*—human cannibals—also gather in the mapou to conduct their affairs.

789 Against all these creatures, and against black magic in general, there
[776] are many magical protections, the most common of which is the *garde corps* (protect the body), or simply the *garde.* It is usually obtained from a bocor and consists of a small bag of mysterious ingredients. The owner wears it around his waist or around his neck. Sometimes it is merely a cord with a number of ritually made knots. The garde corps is made to prescription and protects the wearer against specific things such as a lou-garo, poison, or death from a bullet or knife. In describing a garde corps he had prepared for a client, a bocor revealed that it contained dried chicken blood, extract of *wari* bean, and *gris-gris* powder, among "a thousand and one" ingredients. The *gris-gris* powder is made from a dried *gris-gris* bird.[2]

There is another form of protective magic, broader in scope, called
the *arrête.* It is used to protect not merely an individual but an entire
household, or even a group of households. In addition to warding off
[954] supernatural creatures and protecting people against assassins, the arrête
is a neutralizing agent against various forms of black magic such as
the ouanga and the *makanda.* The arrête bundle or object is hung in
the house or in a nearby tree, or it is buried somewhere on the grounds.
Sometimes it is nothing more than a pointed stick placed in a certain
way before a door or gate, or at one side of the trail leading to the

[1] [Simpson, "Haitian Magic," Social Forces, October, 1940, p. 97. Cf. p. 351, category 116. --Analyst]

[2] [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351.--Analyst]

When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special 775 789
ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes: 824

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Nans Léogane
Yo marré zombie nans paille fig-banane!
Abolo wye-oh!

In Léogane
They tie the zombie with banana straw!
That is all, *wye-oh!*

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the mental hospital at Pont Beudet. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain 775
permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-* 793
lèvé (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains 754
power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then 774
"removing the soul" (*retiré n'âme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*metté n'âme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death 775
may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor 793
stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the 789
dead person's name: "Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! 754 791
Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead 775
persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his 754
disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthern jars in 792
his hounfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and specters, 184 775
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776 others only half believe, and many look upon these creatures as imaginary but exciting to talk about.

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The zombie finds a favored place in the tales children make up to tell one another, and the traditional song played by children on the earth bow or mosquito drum goes:

Maringouin pinga zombie oh, Bobo Maria!
Maringouin pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie! [Ex. 92]

Mosquito beware the zombie, oh, Bobo Maria!
Mosquito beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie!

Or they may sing with great bravado, to the clapping of hands.

Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, teau teau!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocoto!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing! [Ex. 93]

Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, *teau teau!*
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, *colocoto!*
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, *kalainkaintaing!*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-AA]

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[782] *37. A small graveyard in the mountains at Furcy. The little alcoves in the tombs are for food offerings on special anniversaries.*

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● [776] *38. Stone and brick covering of spring on Morne l'Hôpital believed to have been constructed in colonial times. Many persons have testified that here the voices of the loa have been heard bubbling up with the water.*

[P. 112-DD]

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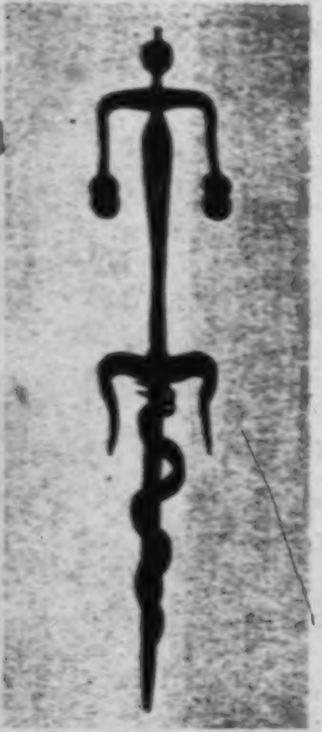
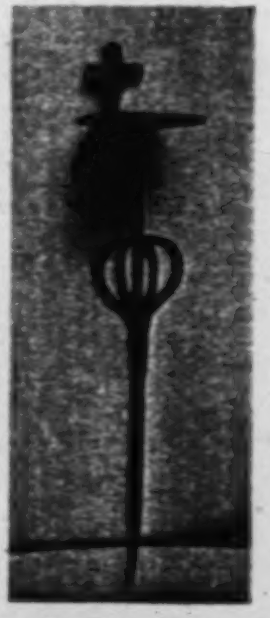


42. Forged iron "saber" of the loa Damballa, from a hounfor near Léogane. Height, 32 inches.



43. Forged iron standard for holding ritual objects, from a hounfor in the region of Léogane. Height, 18 inches.

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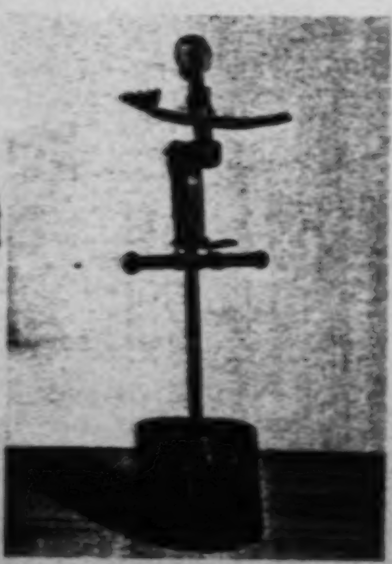

44. Ancient iron figure of the loa Quinçon Fer, from a hounfor near Léogane. Height, 12 inches.

45. Old iron ritual bell, or ogan, from a hounfor in southern Haiti. Height, 11 inches.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-EE]

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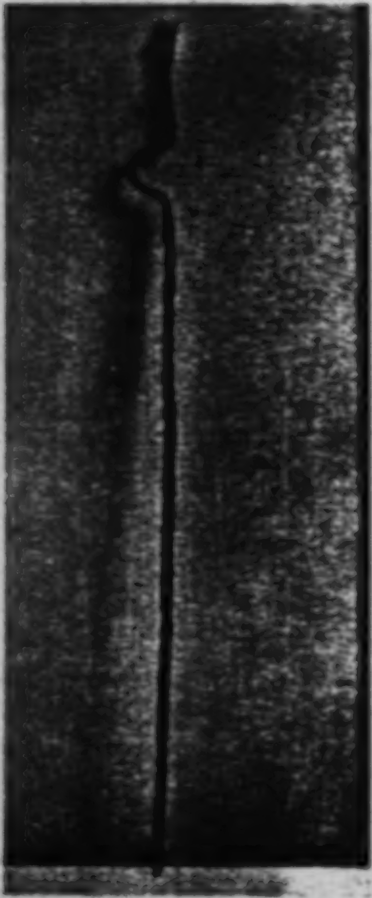

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46. Forged iron rod in the stylized form of a snake, representing the loa Damballa, from southern Haiti. Height, 34 inches.

47. Iron sculpture on a Nago altar of a hounfor near Gonaives, representing a bird sitting on a tree.

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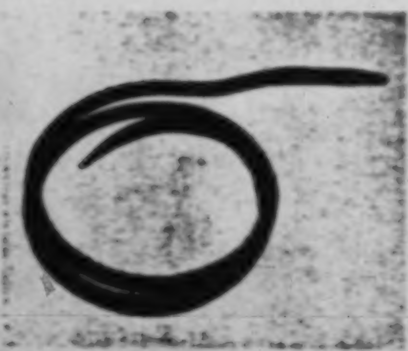
48. A sculptured iron standard in a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.



49. Forged snake, representing Damballa, from southern Haiti. Length in coiled form, 9 inches.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-FF]

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50. Representation of the loa La Sirène, made by a contemporary blacksmith.

51. Representation of the loa St. Jacques by the same blacksmith.

[P.112-GG]

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52 and 53. Wall paintings representing loa, in a small houmfor on Morne l'Hôpital.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-HH]

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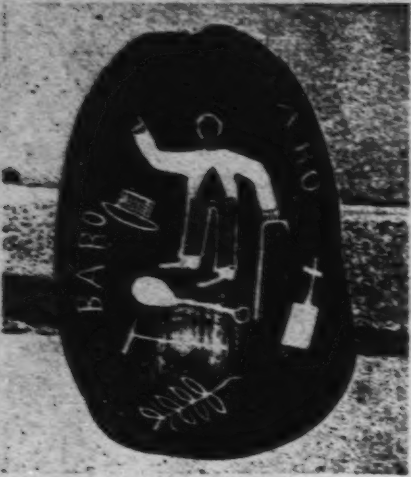

54. Inside surface of a calabash bowl used in rituals of the hounfor, painted in black and white. The figure represents the graveyard loa, Baron Samedi, with a pick, shovel, and tombstone. Length, 15 inches.

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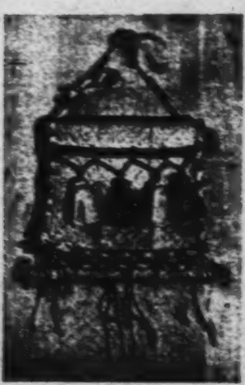

55. An alfor cousin, the traditional peasant knapsack.

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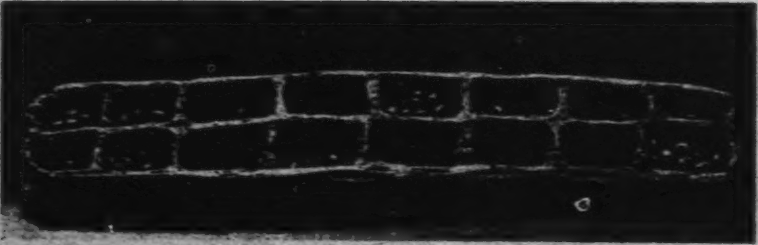

56. Wari board cut from a mahogany log. Length, 29 inches.

[P 112-II]

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57. Old wood carving of an unidentified deity, from a hounfor near Léogane. It is startlingly similar to the African carving shown in no. 58.

58. A wood carving from the Bambala tribe, western Belgian Congo. (Collection of Segy Gallery.)

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59. Carvings of more recent date, representing the loa of twins, from a hounfor in southern Haiti. Height, 12 and 14 inches.

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532

[178]
[776]
→

60. *A carved cane head from the southwestern mountains.*

61. *Detail of a wood carving made about 1930 in the region of Port-au-Prince, representing the loa Loko. Work of this kind in mahogany has in the past thirty years deteriorated into neo-"African" carvings made for the tourist trade.*

322
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415
←

323
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→

62. *A cayambouque. Cut from a single calabash, the two parts fit together tightly to form a single container. Some cayambouques are a foot or more tall. Height, 8 inches.*

63. *Terra-cotta figurines from the Cap Haitien region.*

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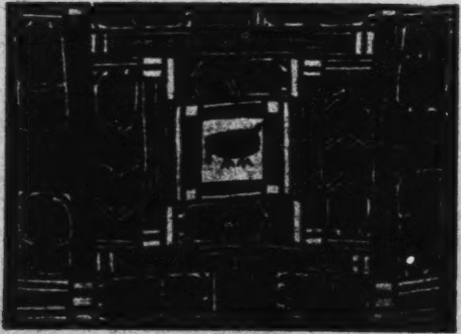

64. *Detail of a dye-painted burlap cloth. Animal and flower figures and geometric designs are used interchangeably.*

[P.112-N]

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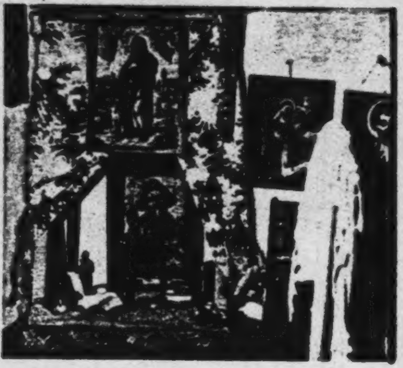
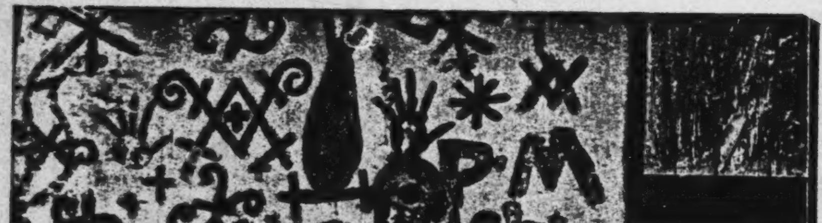
778

20. A Vodoun altar in northern Haiti, scarcely distinguishable from a Catholic shrine. Hounfors range from the simple to the complex, from the poor to the rich, from the primitive to the sophisticated, and from the bizarre to the artistic.



[794]
[776]

21. Altar in the hounfor "Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur" in Port-au-Prince dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza. The cross surmounted by the skull represents the deity. Behind the table, leaning against the cross, is the pestle with which this loa "grinds" his enemies. On the other table are razor blades for Pinga Maza to cut.



[P.112-Q]

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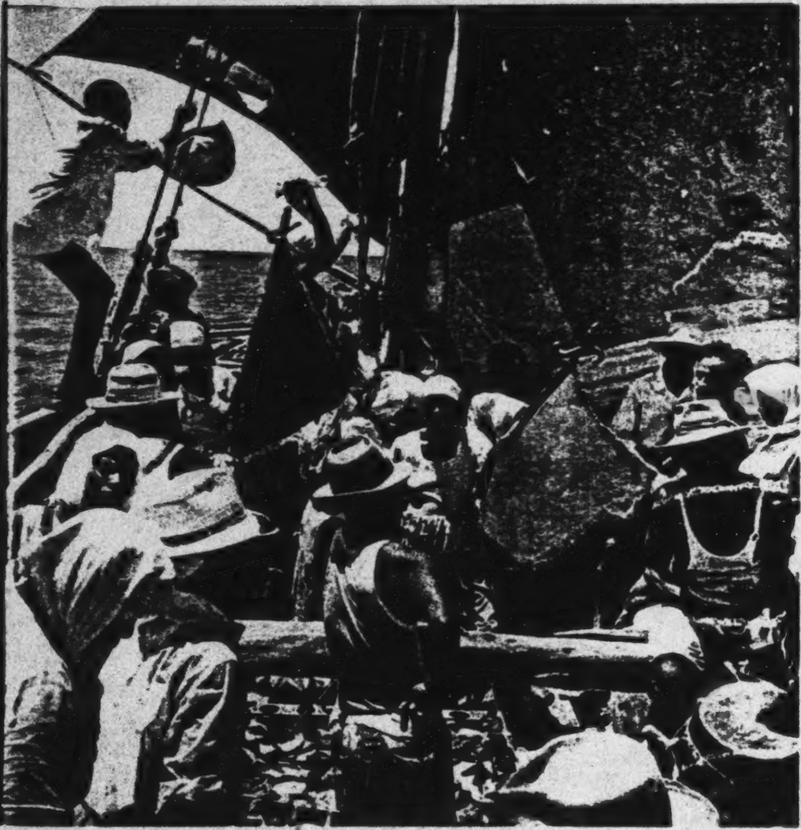
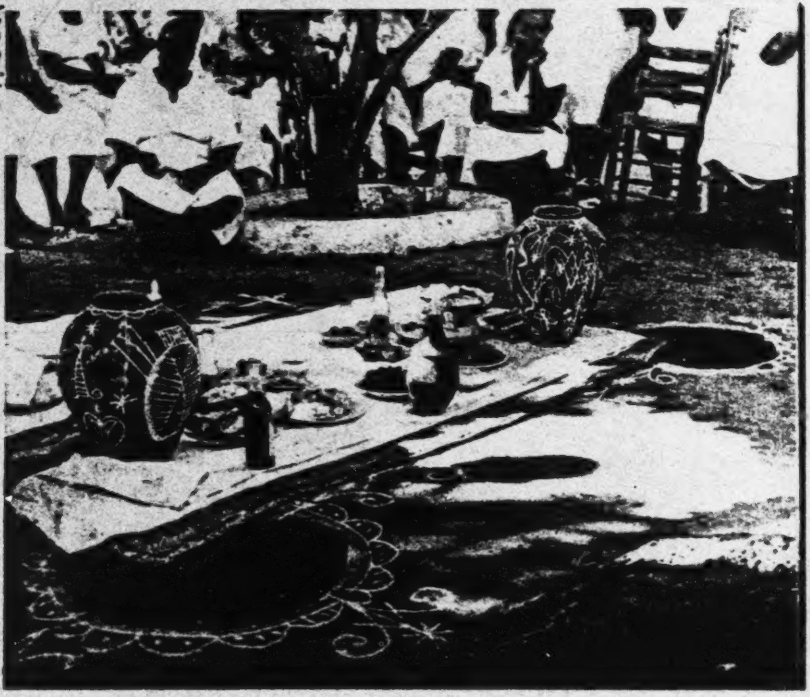


● [776]
[534]

26. Service for the loa Agwé in a boat at sea. In the center, two hounsi hold the société's flags. Between them and the houngan is the bedecked barque d'Agwé, a raftlike miniature vessel which will be set adrift. An ogan and a drum are at the lower right.

291
516
776
782
778
532
415

31. *An Ibo service in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Laid out on the mat is a feast for the Ibo loa. The houngan ritually feeds the deities by placing food in the holes at each end of the mat. Designs on the pots are the symbolic patterns found generally in vèvès. The tree in the background, surrounded by a low curbing, is sacred to the loa.*



[P. 112-W]

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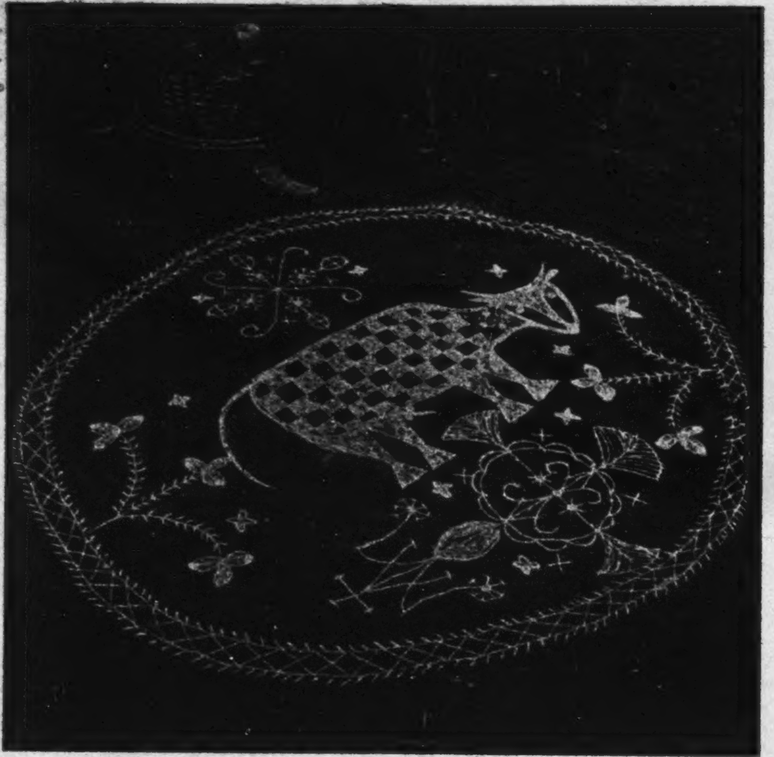
● 776



32. *Maize-flour drawing, or vèvè, for the loa Simbi.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-Z]

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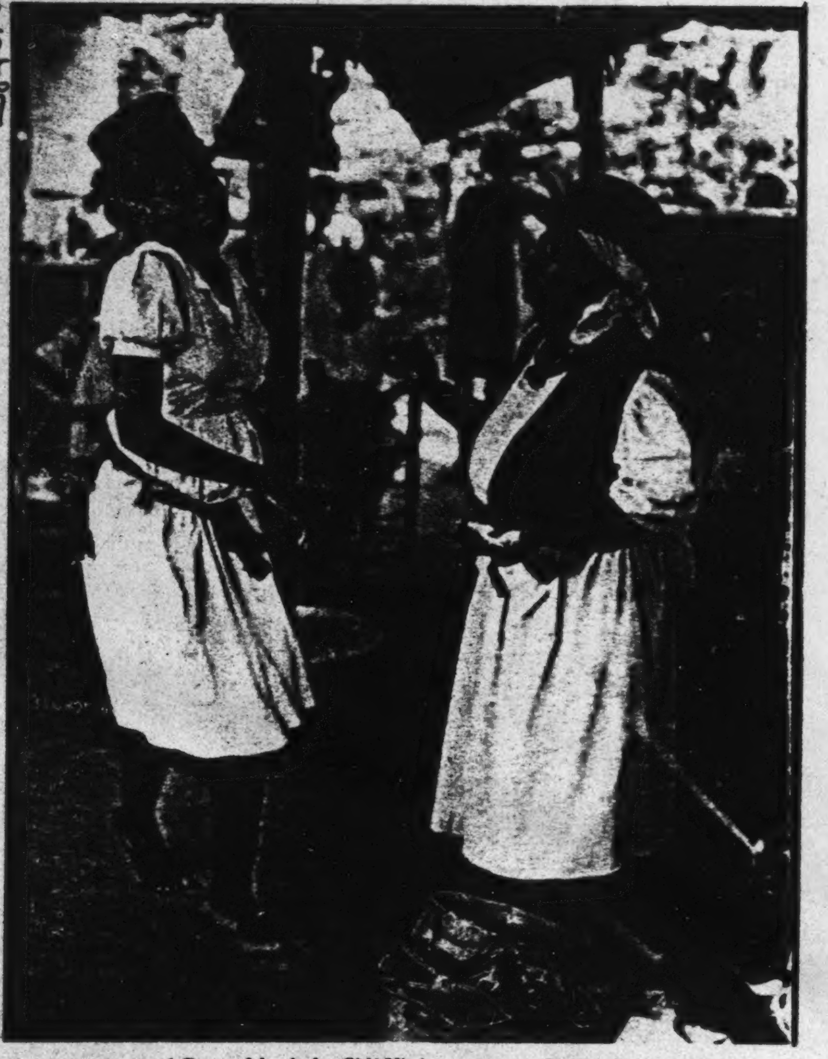
787



36. Possessed by the loa Gèdé Nimbo, two women dance the deity's favorite step, the Banda.

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies 175
knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thou- 178
sands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the 326
roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no 648
matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the
enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not
altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the
Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual ob-
jects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in 326
the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, 778
made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to 178
standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both [184]
single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords [534]
and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled [171]
iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized [776]
or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are
nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past
decade.[2]

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic 322
decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is 531
on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing
from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa.
The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in
which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly
utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, 323
uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of
glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari 524
gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, 322
without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in ap- 501
pearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that 531
esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or [517]
alfor, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm [482]
and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Dec- [285]
orated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta [386)
dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some com- 531
munities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted 353
with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar [184)
bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes
with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[2] [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

533*

When I want to talk you do not want me to talk! 539*
When I want to sing you do not want me to sing! 794
Dahomey *y ou*, they do me wrong! * 626

Another note of criticism within the hounfor concerns a person who has been putting on airs of importance. The song states that he (or she) in reality has not even qualified for the lowest order within the cult, even though he behaves as though he were the cult chief:

Ou poco hounsi oh!	You are not yet a hounsi, oh!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan!	You tell me you are a houngan!
Ou poco hounsi!	You are not yet a hounsi!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan c'est ça!	You tell me you are a houngan, it is so!
Oh Paille à Terre!	Oh, Straw on Earth! †
Poussé allé!	Push and go!
Oh Allada malade oh! [Ex. 99]	Oh, Allada is sick, oh! ‡

Poverty is so normal in Haitian life that a man who accumulates 556
wealth in any form becomes conspicuous. Ordinarily he does not welcome 626
this conspicuousness. It makes him a target of gossip and rumors, and 533*
of those who might wish to collect debts from him, borrow money, or 539*
obtain other favors. He becomes a *gros nèg'*, and finds himself in- [735]
creasingly cut off from the community of ordinary, poor people. Needless to say, Haitians, like other people, dream of striking it rich. Wherever poverty has been acute, whether in Europe, Asia, or America, the folklore is full of tales of finding great treasures. Haiti is no exception. Many Haitian folk tales and folk songs deal with this theme, particularly with obtaining wealth by magical or supernatural means. Sometimes [787]
riches are obtained through *engagements*, unholy compacts with devils [776] ●
or demons. In some stories loa facilitate the discovery of treasure, in others a powerful bocor accomplishes it through magical practices. If a man suddenly becomes well-to-do, therefore, rumors may spread in regard to how he came by his wealth. If he is suspected of dealings with devils or with a powerful bocor, his apparent success in his venture makes him a neighbor to be feared. To avoid incurring envy and hostility, people tend to play down their financial successes and pretend they have nothing in life but the clothes they wear, their houses, and their gardens. Spreading word that a poor man has hidden money is regarded as a mean and reprehensible act. Numerous folk songs protest against this injustice:

Désastre tombé nans lacour-wà!
Si m'apé travaille là nans cour-wà,

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* Literally: They eat my rights.

† An exclamation, the name of a certain ouanga.

‡ Allada, the name of a town in Dahomey, used in the sense of "people of Dahomey." The line means, "Things are in a bad state of affairs."

Qua'm perd' un garçon moin join' l'aut' oh!
Ma rélé,
Oh qua'm perdit manman moin ma crié! [Ex. 102]

533*
539*
593

I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
When I lost a man I found another, oh!
When I lost a man I found another, oh!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!

Protest or complaint songs are sometimes directed against no one in particular but simply call the attention of listeners to the singer's misfortunes. In many such songs the president or one of the deities is mentioned by name. The singer in this way implicitly places responsibility for help. In the following song, one complains of hunger, another theme that runs throughout Haitian folklore and Haitian life.

533*
539*
261

Rwo! President qui voyé rélé'm!
Moin pas bwè moin pas mangé!
M'pas bwè moin pas mangé!
Oh m'pas bwè moin pas mangé!
President qui voyé rélé'm rwo!
M'pas bwè moin pas mangé! [Ex. 103]

Rwo! * The President sends for me!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
Oh, I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
The President sends for me, *rwo!*
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!

Here the loa Ogoun Balindjo is called upon to take note of prying, insincere people who come to a person's house, observe what is going on, and go away to gossip:

533*
539*
521
[776] ●
[782]

Ogoun Balindjo
Yo vini ga'dé'm
Pou' y'allé valé oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
Li yé wè bouche pé oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
Pas wè yo vini ga'dé moin? [Ex. 104]

Ogoun Balindjo
They come to look at me

---

* An exclamation.

[P. 317]
[P. 316 is blank]

1. The Pantheons

Most of the loa of Haiti appear to belong to two major cult groupings: the Vodoun (dominated by Dahomé rites and traditions) and the Congo-Guinée (dominated mainly by the Pétro deities). In the Vodoun pantheon one finds deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, and others whose names seem to identify them with West African peoples such as the Mahis, the Amines, the Adjas, the Foulas, the Sousous, and the Haoussas. The so-called Congo-Guinée group, in addition to the Pétro escorte, appears to have absorbed many loa from Central Africa. Among the Congo-Guinée loa are such names as Mayombé, Loango, Bumba, Moundongue, Mousondi, Angole, Congo, Baganda, and Solongo, all of them designations of regions or tribes of the Congo area. Also in this pantheon are loa bearing the names Bambarra and Siningal (Senegal), from northwestern Africa.

776
794
184

It is not possible to group the loa in such a way that the system will reflect accurately the tradition and usage in all parts of the country. Had all the old cults or "nations" survived intact, the pantheons might have resembled the following:

Arada or Dahomey loa
Anago or Yoruba loa
Mahi loa
Congo loa (including the Moundongue, the Solongo, the Bumba, etc.)
Ibo loa
Kanga loa
Pétro loa
Etc.

In certain parts of Haiti, in scattered and isolated places, one finds Congo, Ibo, and Nago cults that have resisted absorption; but this pattern does not hold for most of the country. In general, Congo and Pétro tend to "march" together; Anago has become a "nation" within

776 184 794 a "nation" in the Dahomé rites; and the Ibo group, though still distinct, is frequently allied with the Dahomé rites or the Guinée rites.

The following list does not pretend to include all the loa known in Haiti. It is doubtful that a complete list could ever be compiled, in view of the continual generation of new deities and the constant cross-[128] fertilization between "nations." The loa are grouped here according to most widespread usage. There are contradictions from which there is no possible escape, and these general groupings will not necessarily correspond to the concepts and practices of any specific locality. It is intended here to give a broad and generalized view.

128 776 794 Under "The Vodoun Pantheon" I have placed constellations of deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, along with others that are clearly identified with Vodoun rites. Under "The Congo and Pétro Pantheons" I have listed the Congo-Guinée loa—consisting mainly of deities associated with Central Africa and deities affiliated with the Pétro rites. Ibo and Kanga loa are grouped together, because in many regions of Haiti the two pantheons appear to be interlocked. A separate listing is given for the Simbi family of water deities in view of their ambivalence; they are sometimes found in the Pétro group and sometimes in the Dahomé, according to local practice.

THE VODOUN PANTHEON

776 171 DAMBALLA WÈDO, or DAN WÈDO. One of the most venerable of Haitian loa. He is generally recognized as the husband of Ayida Wèdo, though occasionally the two deities are merged in a personality called Damballa-Ayida. The concept of a single identity for Damballa and Ayida conforms to Dahomean belief. In both Haiti and West Africa, Damballa is identified with the rainbow and is symbolized as a snake.^ In Haiti he is associated also with rainfall, springs, and fertility. He is sometimes [782] described as "white," and the proper food offering to him is a white chicken. Persons [787] possessed by Damballa usually take on stylized characteristics of snakes. Along with [177] many other important loa, he has become identified with characters in Christian religious belief. There are, in fact, "two" Damballa Wèdos. One, identified with Moses, comes in talking; the other, identified with St. Patrick, never talks. Food [782] offerings for the St. Patrick version of Damballa consist of eggs, flour, sugar, and almond syrup. Damballa remains one of the chief gods of the Dahomey cult in Cuba, and he survived into the last century in New Orleans under the name Danny.

[822] AYIDA WÈDO. Generally regarded in Haiti as the wife of Damballa, Ayida is also symbolized by snake and rainbow, and her color, like Damballa's, is "white." In Dahomey and Nigeria, Ayida is known as a male rather than a female spirit and is regarded there as the same divinity as Damballa, or Dji. In Dahomey, Ayida Wèdo was the great serpent who held up the world. According to one myth, the Creator of the World assigned to Ayida the task of holding up the earth to keep it from falling into the sea. The great serpent coiled himself, tail in mouth, and lay below

^ [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245 ff. Cf. p. 354, Category 46. --Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. 776
Whenever Ayida Wèdo shifted his position there were earthquakes.[2] When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayida had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. [171] [821]

Damballa Grand Chimin (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys. [484]

Damballa Verre. Another manifestation of Damballa.

Domici Wèdo. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (*-ci*) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Doki Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family.

Agão Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. [241]

Êzilie Doba, or Dogba, sometimes spelled **Erzulie.** One of the "big" loa of the Dahomé pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Êzilie are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Êzilies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Êzilie Doba as the ancestor of the Êzilie family and refer to her as Grand Êzilie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dogba at approximately 0° 6′ E., 6° 50′ N. [177] [822] [782] [787] [834] [588]

Êzilie Fréda, or Êzilie Dahomain (Dahomé), **or Êzilie Fréda Dahomain.** Like Êzilie Doba, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. [177] [588] [787] [834]

Êzilie Wèdo. A sister or daughter of Êzilie Doba and also related to Damballa.

Êzilie Maisol. A sister of Êzilie Fréda.

Êzilie Banda. A manifestation of Êzilie who is especially fond of the Banda dance.

Êzilie Jérouge (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Êzilie who is often identified with Pétro rather than Dahomé rites.

Aïson Fréda. A member of the Êzilie escorte, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Aïson was a protector of all public gathering places.[3] [443] [171]

Aïson Belékété

Aïson Dleau Bolo Bosu

Maîtresse Mambo. A special form of Êzilie as priestess.

Maîtresse Espagnole, or 'Pagnole. A person mounted by this Êzilie talks only Spanish. [787] [191]

Sobo, or Sogbo. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sobo are regarded as the sacred residence of various loa. Sobo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. 776 171

Sogbo Badé, or Sobo Badé, or simply Badé. A close relative of Sobo, regarded as the protector of the hounfor (*badé*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sobo.[4]

[2] [See Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 47-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. --Analyst]

[3] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[4] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 152ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

776 Agomé Tonnerre, also pronounced Abomé Tonnerre. Another thunder loa. Abomé (or Agbomé) is the name of an ancient capital of Dahomey.

Badési. The wife of Sobo Badé.

[171] So Narcisse, also called Sogo Narcisse, or simply So. A thunder loa of Dahomean origin. In Dahomey he is regarded as an offspring of Mawu and Lisa, and a member of the Sky pantheon.

[171] [766] Kébiosu, or Kébioso. A thunder loa who, like Sobo, hurls stones to the earth. In Dahomey he is known as Xevioso and is thought to be the same deity as So. In Haiti, persons killed by lightning are thought to be enemies of Kébiosu and are given special treatment in burial.

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776 782 [821] [822] Agwé Woyo, known also as Coqui-Nan-Mer. He is a loa of the sea; thunder and lightning over the ocean are thought to be Agwé shooting his cannon. He is usually symbolized [illegible] pictures by a sailing or steam vessel. His colors are blue and white, and the primary sacrificial animal for him is a male goat. High ceremonies for Agwé are begun in the hounfor and consummated in a sailing boat on the open sea, from which is launched a highly decorated and stylized miniature ship containing food for the deity. This tiny craft is known as the *barque d'Agwé*. Hounfors honoring this spirit usually have a small boat hanging from the rafters. In Dahomey, [171] Agwé is also a sea deity and a member of the Thunder pantheon.

776 [171] Agwétta Woyo. She is thought to be Agwé Woyo's wife, though in Dahomey she was considered to be his daughter.

Agwésu Wandéou. Said to be the son of Agwé.

La Sirène. Another deity of the sea, a latecomer visualized as a mermaid. La Sirène is usually thought of as belonging to a separate family, though she is frequently served along with Agwé. Some sociétés do not recognize her at all.

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776 171 Nananbouclou, or Nanan Bouloucou. A loa of herbs and medicines. In Dahomey this spirit was considered the grandparent of all deities, the progenitor of Mawu and Lisa from whom all demigods are descended.[5] She is still remembered in the Dahomey cults of Cuba.

Lissa or Lisha. Probably the Lisa of Dahomey, child of Nanbouclou.

Attibon Legba, or Legba Sé. One of the most important of Haitian loa, frequently the first one invoked in any service. He is the guardian of the gateway, the [782] crossroads, and the highway. Cocks and male goats are his favorite foods, as in West Africa. In Dahomean tradition, Legba is the youngest offspring of Mawu and Lisa, the progenitors of all Dahomean deities. He is a divine trickster who is both feared [778] and loved, a force that is capriciously malevolent or benevolent. Today, as in earlier times in Dahomey, the image of Legba, made of clay, stands or sits before the entrance to many villages. Sometimes the image is nothing more than a mound or column of earth symbolizing a phallus. Legba's mischief and tricks are directed against the other deities and human beings. In Haiti, as in Dahomey, Legba is not a personal deity. As Herskovits points out, Legba has no "character" and cannot be [787] relied on. He is the intervener between mankind and the deities. It is in this sense that he "opens the gate," providing a channel of communication between man and loa; and it is for this reason that he is often supplicated first in religious ritual. In Dahomean lore, Legba's mischief is often in the realm of sex. In ritual dances for

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[5] [Ibid, pp. 101 ff. Cf. p. 354, Category 116.--Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

Legba in Dahomey, the performers hold a carved phallus between their legs 776
and perform copulating movements. The Haitian Legba is depicted as an aged 171
limping loa, and the carved phallus has become a grotesque crutch-cane that fits into [831]
the crotch of the legs. The Dahomean Legba is remembered elsewhere in the New World, notably in Dutch Guiana, Brazil, and Cuba. Until relatively recent times he was known among the Negroes of Louisiana by the name Papa Lebat.[6]

LEGBA GRAND CHEMIN (Legba of the Highway). A special manifestation of Legba who guards the highway.

LEGBA KALFU (Legba of the Crossroads). A special manifestation of Legba who guards the crossroads.

LEGBA MAÎT' 'BITATION (Legba Master of the Household). The Legba who protects the house and its grounds.

LEGBA LAPLEURONDÉ. One of the Legba family.

LEGBA KÉVÉ. One of the Legba family.

LEGBA AGUATOR. Said to be a "Nago" deity.

ATTIBON KÉKÉ. One of the Legba family.

ATTIBON SAMARDI. One of the Legba family.

AZOMBLO KIDÍ. One of the Legba family.

OGOUN FERAILLE, often referred to as MAÎT' OGOUN. The chief and ancestor of a large family of loa whose activities have to do with blacksmithing and war, which are closely related. Ogoun Feraille is a patron of warriors and the forge; his symbol is a piece of forged iron, such as a machete, a hoe blade, a saber, or a piece of iron chain. In West Africa, Ogoun is considered a patron of hunters as well.[7] He was widely known by various peoples in Dahomey and Nigeria. In Dahomey he was considered a child of the divine Mawu and Lisa,[8] and among the Yoruba of Nigeria he was regarded as a brother of Chango and Dada,[9] two spirits who survive in the Haitian pantheon. An altar to Ogoun Feraille, like that of the loa Chango, may consist of a pile of iron scrap, perhaps a broken sugar vat. In Cuba, Ogoun Feraille is a prominent deity in both the Arara (Dahomey) and the Lucumí (Yoruba) cults. Although absorbed exclusively into the Dahomé family of rites in Haiti, Ogoun Feraille and his entire family and escorte are designated as belonging to the Nago [822]
"nation." Their color, like that of heated iron, is red. Ogoun Feraille survived until recent times in Louisiana as Joe Feraille.[10]

OGOUN FER (Ogoun Iron). He is sometimes called OGOUN ST. JACQUES, ST. JACQUES 776
MAJEUR, or simply ST. JACQUES, being identified with the saint of that name.

OGOUN MASHOQUETTE (Ogoun Blacksmith).

OGOUN BAKALA. One of the Ogoun brothers.

OGOUN BALTAZA MISHO. One of the Ogoun brothers.

OGOUN JÉNISON, or JÉRISON. One of the Ogoun brothers.

OGOUN BADAGRY, or BATAGRI. Said to be a "grandson" of Maît' Ogoun. He is a 776
"work" loa, as well as an ironworker and a warrior, and helps in the fields, especially 171
in time of sickness. Badagry is the name of a town near the mouth of the Ogoun River in western Nigeria. According to a priest of the Cuban Dahomé cult, the word *batagri* was used to designate the circumcision house in Dahomey. Ogoun Badagry thus may have been associated with that shrine.

CHANGO, or OGOUN CHANGO. A member of the Ogoun family and, like most of his brothers, a warrior and ironworker. Chango's altar is usually a pile of scrap iron, or

[6] [Ibid, pp. 201ff. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[7] [Ellis, The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 67. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[8] [Herskovits, Op. cit., pp. 105ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst

[9] [Ellis, The Yoruba-speaking Peoples, pp. 45, 67ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

[10] [Library of Congress Recording, No. 101. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

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● 776 171 any iron object, such as a sugar vat. In West Africa, Chango (or Shango) and Ogoun were considered separate deities. In Nigeria, according to Ellis, they were brothers, closely associated with each other. Among the Yoruba, Chango was a thunder-and-lightning god and he is believed to have been one of the early kings of Oyo. The African Chango, like the Haitian, is identified with fire, a corollary of lightning, and persons possessed by him may carry pots of fire on their heads and perform other fire tests.[11]

Chango Golo. Another manifestation of Ogoun Chango.

Ogoun Bachango. Possibly the same as Ogoun Chango, or he may be named after the Bachangos, a Congo tribe. A warrior and ironworker.

Ogoun Balizai. One of the Ogoun family.

Nimbo Nimbo. One of the Ogoun family.

Archardé, Achardé, Chardé, or Chadé. One of the Ogoun escorte, sometimes called Ogoun Chadé, or Chadé Bocor.

Ogoun Yimsen. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Obatala, or Batala. A loa of war. Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, Obatala was a sky deity and protector of the town gates. He was thought to form children in the womb and was therefore believed responsible for albinism and congenital deformities.[12] Obatala and Chango are among the main Lucumí (Yoruba) deities in Cuba.

Ogoun Bayé. An aspect of Ogoun who functions as a gateway guardian.

Ogoun Blanc (White Ogoun). He does not drink rum, which is a favorite beverage of his brothers.

Ogoun Jebba

Ogoun Jèkka, Jèkkè, or Yèkkè. A warrior and ironworker. Jèkkè may have been a shrine or regional designation.

Ogoun Kèbèk

Ogoun Kénison

Yalodé, or Ogoun Lodé. Brother of Ogoun Badagry and the other Ogouns. Yalodé is clearly of Dahomean origin.[13]

Ogoun Panama, or Ogoun Palama. Guardian against sunstroke, or spirit responsible for sunstroke. A brother of Ogoun Badagry. He is usually seen wearing a Panama hat.

Ogoun Pierre Narcisse

Ogoun Jérouge (Ogoun Red Eyes). A malevolent Ogoun brother, red eyes being a mark of bad behavior. Some people feel that he is a member of the Pétro rather than the Vodoun pantheon.

Nago Piment. A member of the Ogoun escorte. He eats hot peppers.

Boulicha Nago

* * *

776 346 [184] Gèdé Nimbo, or Nibo, also called Brave Gèdé. One of the powerful deities of the Vodoun pantheon, particularly in the region of Port-au-Prince, where many hounfors cater extensively to him. Gèdé Nimbo, along with his numerous brothers and his vast escorte, is a "dead" loa, a spirit of the graveyard, a sexual rascal, and a violator [778] of propriety. He is served apart from the other loa, and usually he has a separate altar or shrine outside the central hounfor. Cult centers for Gèdé are often near graveyards, though not necessarily so. Gèdé services abound around the main cemetery of Port-au-Prince. Gèdé Nimbo has various manifestations, but he is usually 776

[11] [Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, p. 47; W. R. Bascom in Introduction to record album Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf. p. 354, Category 116, -- Analyst]

[12] Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, pp. 38 ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

[13] Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, pp. 71-74; Herskovits, op. cit. I, 37 Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116, -- Analyst]

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dressed in a black frock coat, black top hat, and black trousers or a blue, white polka-dotted skirt. He carries a cane and smokes a pipe or a cigarette, according to which manifestation of Gèdé he represents. He talks with a strong nasal accent, which is acquired by anyone mounted by him. Gèdé Nimbo is always asking for money. Persons possessed by him may rub hot peppers on their tongues or in their eyes. In some parts of Haiti, Gèdé is thought to be identical with Baron Samedi. In a Vodoun service, no other loa cares to enter while a Gèdé is present; and Gèdé delights in appearing suddenly, uninvited, and obstructing the orderly progress of a ritual. Although Herskovits points out that Gedeonsu, or Gèdé, is a Dahomean totem,[1] it is worth noticing that in Haiti the Gèdé rites are often regarded as belonging to the Nago "nation." 776 [787] [171]

GÈDÉ NIMBO MAZAKA. A Gèdé brother.

GÈDÉ OUÈSOU. A Gèdé brother.

GÈDÉ L'ORAILLE. A thunder or storm Gèdé. Like the other Gèdés, he is closely associated with death, and he is considered more of a malefactor than most. He is repulsive in appearance, with a dwarflike stature.

GÈDÉ MIVÈVOU. A Gèdé brother.

GÈDÉ NANSOU. A Gèdé brother.

GÈDÉ NOUVAVOU. A Gèdé brother.

GÈDÉ VI. Said to be a son of Gèdé Nimbo, though some Haitians regard this loa as a female, possibly Gèdé Nimbo's wife.

GÈDÉ ZECLAI. A loa of lightning, thought to be responsible for death by lightning, violent death in general, and destruction of cattle and other property by natural forces. He seems to be a Gèdé version of Kébioso or Sobo. [766]

JEAN ZOMBIE. One of the Gèdé brothers, a "dead" spirit.

GÈDÉ TI PISSE (Gèdé Little Flea)

GÈDÉ RACHÉ (Gèdé Tear Off)

GÈDÉ JOYEUSE (Happy Gèdé)

TIWAWÈ GÈDÉ, or GÈDÉ TIWAWÈ PANCHÈ. This Gèdé is one that makes mischief as he enters a hounfor service.

GÈDÉ ZILÉ (Gèdé of the Island)

GÈDÉ YALOVI

GÈDÉ YABOFÉ

CIRCLÉQUITTÉ GÈDÉ (The Gèdé Who Mows Down)

JENSIMAN BRITISSE. A loa who works with the Gèdé family, one of Gèdé Nimbo's graveyard assistants. He is described as having a white skin, suggesting that his surname is a corruption of "British."

MARIE GÈDÉ. A sister of the Gèdé brothers.

BALÉROUZÉ. One of the Gèdé brothers. His name means to "sweep and sprinkle," a ritual activity characteristic of certain Vodoun ceremonies.

MANZÈ BRIDGIT, or MANMAN BRIDGIT. The mother of the Gèdé brothers.

MAÎT' SANSAN. One of the Gèdé escorte.

BARON SAMEDI. One of a group of Barons who march with the Gèdés. They are so closely identified that some Haitians feel that Baron Samedi is merely another name for Gèdé Nimbo. Persons possessed in cemeteries are thought to be mounted by Baron Samedi or one of his brothers. Like the Gèdés, the Barons are spoken of as "dead" spirits. [787]

BARON PIQUANT. The loa in charge of grave digging.

[1] [Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 267, cf. p. 354, Category 776. -- Analyst]

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● 776 Azagon Lacroix, or Baron Lacroix. Spoken of as "chief" of the cemetery, the one who plants the cross over the grave.
Baron Poussière, or Poussè (Baron Dust)
Baron Sal (Baron Earth, or Dirty Baron)
Baron Chita. The Baron who sits on the graves.
Baron Tikalé

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[775] [171] Azaka Médé, or Zaké Médé. Herskovits reports that Ázaka Mèlé is the name of the stream which Dahomeans believe all the dead must cross.[15]

Cousin Zaka. The peasant Zaka, special patron of the country farmer and the people of the mountains. He is always portrayed as wearing the blue denim costume of the peasant, carrying the woven peasant knapsack called an *alfor cousin* and a cocomacaque stick, and smoking a clay pipe. Persons possessed by Cousin Zaka are dressed in this way, and they speak in the manner of the mountain man, a style that is heard only in the most remote communities. [987]

Minise Zaka, or Ministre Zaka. An aspect of Cousin Zaka. Ministre Zaka is a sort of Minister of Agriculture and a patron of peasant farmers.

Si Azaka. The wife of Ministre Zaka.

Azaka Tonnerre, or Tonnè. The Azaka who brings thunder and rain.

Azaka Baing Baing. One of the Azaka family.

Marassa. The loa of twins. The Marassa family of deities are in a special category, somewhat apart from other spirits. In an important Vodoun service, for example, there are invocations to the loa in general, to the Marassas, to the family ancestors, and to God.

Marassa Doçu. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a boy.

Marassa Doça. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a girl.

Marassa Blanc. Patron of white twins.

Marassa Trois. Patron of triplets.

Marassa Guinée. Patron of twins when one is a boy and one a girl.

Marassa Quat'. Patron of quadruplets, or of two consecutive sets of twins.

Marassa Bois (Marassa of the Woods). He is considered an "unbaptized" or "untamed" loa, and very savage. He likes sweets and never eats salt.

Marassa Douvé, or Marassa Cinq. Patron of consecutive twins and triplets.

Marassa Caille (Marassa of the House). This one eats salt.

Loko Attiso. He is usually pictured as the protector of the hounfor, or cult temple, and as the keeper of the altar (*pé*). In Dahomey, Loko is a deity of the Sky pantheon and a son of the divine Mawu and Lisa.[16] He is still remembered in the Arara (Dahomey) cults of Cuba. He is also called Sindé or Singé. [171]

Loko Attisoqué. Said to be Loko Attiso's wife.

Loko Adäico, or Däico. A member of Loko Attiso's family.

Loko Däifrè. A brother of Loko Adäico (Däico + *frère*).

Loko Däinzo

Loko Tokamiwizo

Loko Dahomé

Loko Bassiyé

Tos Loko

[15] [Ibid, p. 280. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[16] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 108-109. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

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Azão Loko Bayé. A crossroads protector of the Loko family.
Loko Dis Pié

Dans Ossu. Among the Tshi-speaking people of West Africa there was a spirit [171]
called Adanni, a malignant giantess.[18]
Ossu Jarrain
Soumbu Yarrain

Zonbba
Madusegba
Madusegba Endaka

Amine. An aged female loa. Sacrifices to her consist of rice, sugar cane, lima beans, and eggs. As in services for the deity Ezilie, perfumes are used during services for her. [782]

Amine Gatsoal Laplassmo. A member of the Amine family. Amine is the name of a tribe of Dahomey.

Amine Nago. Another member of the Amine family.

Général Clermeil, or Président Clermeil. He is said to be the "father" and patron of all light children born to dark parents. Stories are sometimes heard of men who wrongly accused their wives of infidelity because of the lightness of their children, and who were finally mounted and punished by Clermeil. [782]

Clermézine. The light-skinned daughter of the dark Général Clermeil.

The family relationships or escortes of the following deities are not clear. Some of them may belong to one or another of the foregoing groups, or to still uncited families.

Adja. A female loa associated with the arts of pharmacy. The Yoruba of Nigeria had a spirit named Adja who carried men and women off into the forest to teach them about the medicinal properties of roots and herbs.[19] In Haiti, Adja's mangé consists of cookies and chicken. Persons possessed by her sometimes eat broken glass. [191] [782] [782]

Adja Bosu, Akadja Bosu, or Kadja Bosu. This deity is also known in Dahomey. [191]

Agamman. A male deity characterized as a *zandolite*, a small lizard capable of changing colors. A person mounted by Agamman sometimes climbs trees or posts. Some Haitians contend that a person possessed by this loa will change color, from dark to light. [787]

Agassu. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Agasu is the name of the panther fetish.[20] Dahomeans regard this deity as of special significance to the royal family. He was remembered among Negroes in Louisiana under the name Agoussou. [171]

Agassu Yebrain. Related to Agasu.

Dadal. Among the Yoruba, Dadal was a brother of Ogoun and Chango, and was a patron of vegetables.[21]

Attisolé, also known as **St. Soleil.** Persons mounted as a result of exposure to the sun are thought to be possessed by this loa. The association of Attisolé with the sun may be a syncretism. [789]

Aoumbaut

Aza. A loa who likes the Juba dance.

[18] [Ellis, The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 68. Cf. p. 354, Category 116.--Analyst]

[19] [Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, pp. 79-80. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116.--Analyst]

[20] [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 166; cf. Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, p. 83, [illegible] that [illegible] deities especially important in the [illegible] of Dahomey. Cf. p. 354, Category 116.--Analyst]

[21] [Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, pp. 45, 96. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116.--An.]

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1196 **Aziri.** A snake deity.

Bamboula. A loa who likes the Baboule dance.

Calabasse. Loa of the calabash tree.

[114] [191] **Chébo Previla.** An ancient male deity. Herskovits suggests that he may represent the leopard, *sebo* being the Fon word for that animal. The wildness of the attack on the sacrificial animal by persons possessed by Chébo supports this conjecture. A deity called Dada Segbo is prominent in the Rada Cult of Trinidad.

Sobagui. A male loa who is believed responsible for fine physical proportions and bodily strength in men.

Coqui-Nan-Dleau. Probably the same as Coqui-Nan-Mer (Agwé).

[171] **Agadja.** This loa may well be the King Agadja of Dahomey who was said to be responsible for the coming of *vodu* (loa) into that country. Herskovits tells a legend about a woman named Hwandjile who prevailed upon the king to bring the *vodu* from the kingdom of Adja.[2] Hwandjile herself survives in Haiti under the name

Wandjilé, or Houandjilé

[321] [987] **Linglessou.** A rainbow loa. Persons mounted in sight of a rainbow are thought to be possessed by this deity.

Blemlessou. "Matches" with Linglessou.

Wangol, also called **Agoui Wangol** (King of Angola). This loa appears to be an interpolation from the Congo rites.

[1989] **Alovi, or Gadalovi.** A masculine, dwarflike spirit who likes to disarrange things and play practical jokes. Persons possessed by Alovi may break up gatherings, discommode spectators and dancers, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. Some Haitians regard this loa as belonging more to the Pétro pantheon than to the Dahomé.

Maît' Bois (Master of the Woods). May be an interpolation of Maît' Grand Bois of the Congo-Guinée pantheon.

Maît' Dleau (Master of the Water). May refer to the loa Simbi.

Dan Wédo, or Wédo. A loa known in the Artibonite region. The name is possibly a corruption of Dan Wèdo.

Dja Kéné

Éwo, or Nèg' Éwo. The name is that of a tribe on the Calabar coast of West Africa.

Fabo Pierre. Said to be the son of Pierre Basien.

Général Yambaton, or Jean Baptiste. Probably the Christian name of some Dahomé loa.

Grand Lagaroux. An aged, dwarflike loa, guardian and protector of children.

Grand Alaba, or Alouba

Grand Aloumandia, or Maîtresse Aloumandia. Believed to be a loa who was *maît' tête* of the Emperor Dessalines. Some informants consider this spirit to be a démon or loup-garou rather than a loa.

Hountor. The spirit of the Arada drums. There is a difference of opinion on whether Hountor is a loa in the precise sense or merely a drum spirit. The term is sometimes used to designate the largest drum of the Arada trio.

[184] **Jean Bazou.** A loa well known in the region of Léogane. When he "enters," the possessed persons talk *langage* into a *canarie* (clay water vessel).

[1987] **Maît' David.** This loa always talks immaculate French, and persons possessed by him read cards and tell fortunes.

[2] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 104. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116.--Analyst]

Maît' Grand Chimin (Master of the Highway). Probably Legba. 776

Makanda. Believed to be the spirit of the famous houngan Makandal, who lived during the revolutionary period. He is symbolized as a snake which lives in the ground. Some informants think he is a Pétro rather than a Dahomé loa. [775]

Mambo Çaça

Tijean Dantor (Ancient Tijean)

Whydah Walo. Whydah is the name of a seacoast town in Dahomey.

Zo. A fire deity of clear Dahomean origin.[22]

Olicha

Obas, or Obangé. Known also among the Lucumí cults of Cuba. May be any one of the Obangés mentioned by Herskovits. [771]

Obangé Lélé

Ogoujabà

Papa Dahomé

Pierre Bassico. This loa is sometimes identified with St. Peter. (777)

Pierre Damballa, Dambarra, or **Dambada.** Sometimes identified with St. Peter.

Pierre Walo. Related to Whydah Walo.

Poula, or **Foula.** This name is probably a tribal designation.

Sabata. Described as a loa of ancient times. Sabata or Saghata is the so-called smallpox group of deities of Dahomey.

Sâfla. A female deity, thought by some to belong to the Ézilie Fréda family.

Silibo Gwéto. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Silibo is an ancient sib-founder. [771]

Silibja

Taureau

Ti Crab. This is a "false name"; this loa keeps his real name a secret.

THE AMBIVALENT SIMBI FAMILY

This group of loa in certain regions has attached itself to the Vodoun pantheon, elsewhere to the Congo-Guinée pantheon; but it has not maintained any kind of independent or semi-independent status. The deity Simbi and his family are of Congo origin. [771]

Simba. A male deity, patron of rain and drinking water. Said to be the father of the Simba brothers.

Simbi Dleau. The best known of the Simbi family. Like his father, he is the patron of fresh water, is associated with the spring, and usually is symbolized as a snake. The color sacred to him is white. Altars to Simbi Dleau usually are found at the spring or the well. Sometimes ponds are constructed for him within the hounfor. [823] [822] [778]

Simbi Kitta

Simbi Yendézo, or **Simbi Nan Dé Zeaux** (Simbi in Two Waters). Symbolized as a water snake who lives in the "upper" waters and the "lower" waters.

Grand Simba. The parent of Simba, and ancestor of the entire family of water loa.

Simbi Trois Zilé (Simbi of Three Islands)

Simbi Macaya

Simbi Grand Bois (Simbi of the Forest)

[22] [Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples, pp. 71-74. Cf. p. 354, category 776.--Analyst]

776 Simbi Wangol

Simbi Yenpaka

Simbi Larouzé (The Dew Simbi)

Simbi Devant Bondieu (Simbi Before God)

Simbi Trois Fé (Simbi Three Leaves—the name of a pouin)

Simbi Trois Racines (Simbi Three Roots—the name of a pouin)

THE IBO AND KANGA PANTHEONS

Capläou. A Kanga loa. His name appears to be a survival of the Capläou tribe. Some persons feel he is a member of the Pétro group.

Ibo Foula. An Ibo loa. Note that both Ibo and Foula are tribal designations.

Ibo Mariani, or Marianè. An Ibo loa.

Ibo Héquoiké. An Ibo loa.

[982] Ibo Jérouge (Ibo Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit. Food offerings to her consist mainly of pigs and cocks.

Ibo Lazile. An Ibo loa. The food offering to this loa is a goat.

Ibo Lélé, or Ianman Ibo. An Ibo loa.

[987] Kanga. A Kanga loa. A "hard" or "stern" spirit, thought by some people to be the same as Capläou. Persons mounted by him play with fire and eat hot peppers.

Kanga Trois. A Kanga loa.

Legba Ibo. The Ibo form of the Vodoun Legba.

Mardi Kama, or Ibo Kama. An Ibo loa.

Marie Louise. An Ibo loa.

Nèclèse Ibo. An Ibo loa.

Ibo Suament. An Ibo loa.

Ibo Wanème. An Ibo loa.

Nomination. An Ibo loa.

Toument. An Ibo loa.

Barak. An Ibo loa.

Un Pied Un Main Un Jé (One Foot, One Hand, One Eye). An Ibo loa.

Akoupi. An Ibo loa.

De L'Air. An Ibo loa.

Papa Zao. A Kanga loa.

Zao Langé. A Kanga loa.

Kanga Langa. A Kanga loa.

Ça Ou Mangé Con Ça (What Do You Eat Like That). An Ibo loa.

Takwa, or Saint Akwa. An Ibo loa. When he comes in he speaks "unknown" languages.

THE CONGO AND PÉTRO PANTHEONS

Mait' Grand Bois (Master of the Woods). In Congo rites this loa is regarded as one of the most important of deities, holding a place equivalent to that of Damballa in the Dahomé service. When he "comes in" he makes a great din and racket.

Femme Grand Bois. The wife of Mait' Grand Bois.

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776.

Wangol (King of Angola). He also appears in other rites.

Yaombé, or Mayaombé. This name is a tribal designation, referring to the Mayaombés of the Congo region.

Wangol Dleau (Wangol of the Water)

Moundongue. Often considered to be a "hard" loa. Ritual service to him includes, on special occasions, the cutting off of dogs' ears and tails. He is fond of dogs and is benevolent toward them. The name derives from that of a tribe of the upper Congo region. [782]

Ti Moundongue. Said to be a "son" of Moundongue.

Moundongue Mousaille. A member of Moundongue's family.

Baiacou, or Bèlècou. A loa identified with the morning star, also called Baiacou. There is also a town in Dahomey by this name.

Ganda, or Baganda, also called Nèg' Ganda. A deity taking the name of the Ganda people of Uganda.

Congo Yamingan. A benevolent loa associated with curing and protecting the sick. Certain curative medicine bundles are called *yamingans*. [755]

Macaya Bumba, sometimes called Caya. He takes his name from the Bumba people of the upper Congo River region. The Bumbas are near neighbors of the Moundongues.

Manyo Bumba. One of the Bumba family.

Mariani Moundongue. One of the Moundongue family.

Roi Loangue (King of Loango). Refers to the old African kingdom of that name.

Nanchou. A warrior deity.

Avélékété. Known primarily in northern Haiti. [184]

Dan Pétro. A rather malevolent loa, from whom the Pétro cult takes its name. The mangé for Dan Pétro is a pig. Early observers speculated that Dan Pétro was originally a powerful houngan of prerevolutionary days.[23] [782] [173]

Ayida Pétro. A Pétro version of the Vodoun Ayida Wèdo.

Bakulu Baka, known in some regions by the name Pinga Maza. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats"—i.e., destroys—people. Some informants are inclined to believe that Bakulu and Pinga are separate loa, both of a variety akin to baka or démons.

Bakulu Barak. Related to Bakulu Baka.

Bambarra Taiba. He is visualized as a sea crab. *Taille bas* in Creole means "low hips" and is used to describe a dance posture. The surname Taiba therefore may describe the movements of this loa as he moves about like a crab. [192]

Bolihi Bolisa

Brisé Général, or Général Brisé. He is enormously large and ferocious in appearance. A special loa of the country people. Although stern, he is fond of children. He is symbolized as an owl; his home is in the chardette tree. His physical description suggests that he may be a deification of the epic folklore character Brise Montaigne, or Break Mountains.

Changaman

Congo Jérouge (Congo Red Eyes). A malevolent male spirit. Loa with red eyes are always of bad character.

Congo Mapionne, or Mapiongle. A malevolent spirit.

Congo Savane, or Congo Zandor (Congo of the Plains). Malevolent, fierce, and

[23] [Saint-Méry, De la dance, p. 48. Cf p. 354, Cat. 116. —Analyst]

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●776
[822]
[071]

strong, he is a man-eater; constant reference is made to his mortar in which he grinds people. His ritual color is white; some people believe that his skin is also white. The grinding of a person in a mortar is an African symbolism. A bas-relief in Dahomey reported by Gorer[24] shows King Glele pounding a vanquished king's head in a mortar.

Bosu Trois Cornes

Bosu Yèmain

Bosu Swi Yèmain Yèmain

Dada Ézilie

Ézilie Boucan

Ézilie Un Main Un Pied Un Jé (Ézilie One Hand, One Foot, One Eye)

Ézilie Balianne

Ézilie Dankéé

Ézilie Jérouge (Ézilie Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit.[25]

Ézilie Mapionne, or Mapiongle. A malevolent spirit.

Ézilie Femme Pétro

Ézilie Acoupi

Grand Assonglo

Jean Pierre Poungué

Limba Zão. A deity of Congo origin.

Damballa Laflambeau

Mait' Pimba. Said to be father of Zão Pimba.

Mambo Ayida (Priestess Ayida). A Pétro version of the Vodoun Ayida.

Marinette Congo. A malevolent female loa.

Marinette Pied Chèche (Marinette Dry Feet). Sister to Marinette Bras Chèche, and equally malevolent.

Ogoun Jérouge (Ogoun Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit. A Pétro form of the Vodoun deity, with a different character.

Ogoun Dleau (Ogoun of the Water). Brother of Ogoun Jérouge.

Ogoun Laflambeau. A fire loa. When he comes in he plays with hot coals, hot iron, and flames.

Ogoun Pétro. He is malevolent and "eats" men.

Pimba, or Pemba

Quançon Fer (Iron Pants)

Kitta Banda (Chic Kitta)

Kitta Bayè (Kitta of the Gate). A gateway guardian.

Kitta Congo

Kitta Kanga

Kitta Legba. Possibly the same as Kitta Bayè.

Racine

Rigal. A brother to Général Brisé. A benevolent loa.

Roi Grand Chimin (King of the Highway). May refer to Legba or to another highway loa.

Sililbwo Boquoimé

Taureau Pétro. A Pétro version of the Vodoun Taureau.

Tijean Pétro. A malevolent loa who preys on children from the foliage of the coconut palm.

Tijean Pied Fin (Tijean No Feet). Brother to Tijean Pétro.

[24] [Gorer, Africa Dances, p. 188. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

[25] [For footnote, see Cat. 116, p. 354. --Analyst]

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Tijean Pied Chêche (Tijean Dry Feet). One of the malevolent Tijean brothers. 776 ●
Tikitta Démambré, or Kitta Démambré. Thought to be the son of Kitta Bayè.
Yabofé Limba. A deity of Congo origin.
Zäo Pimba
Zaka Tonnerre (Zaka Thunder)
Zaka Groli
Zaka L'Oraille (Zaka Storm)
Yaki Bossan
Goungoun
Matédénosa
Siningal (Senegal). When this loa enters, the mounted person talks "Arabic." [787]
[191]

[P. 340)

5. Translations of Songs in Chapter 19

533 Many of the Creole song texts included with the music in chapter 19
539 are translated and explained in earlier chapters. The following examples are translations of song texts in chapter 19 to which there is no reference elsewhere in the book.

Example 133

Ézilie Wèdo, *ago*, oh!
The Creoles say like this,
I am not in Africa any more,
I shall do as I please!
The Creoles say like this,
I am not in Africa any more,
I shall do as I please, oh!
I bring myself,
I take myself away,
I do what I please, oh!

● [196] (Ézilie Wèdo is the name of a loa. She boasts that she comes to Haiti
[192] and returns to Africa whenever she wishes. The word *ago* is exclamatory and means something like "I am here.")

Example 134

The Forty Days [Lent], three women, three virgins,
Prayers for the saints, prayers for the walking saints!
Prayers for the loa Saint Antoine, oh, we ask your pardon!

Example 135

In Africa are loa, oh!
Évo évo, hounsi kanzo!
Évo évo, hounsi kanzo!
In Africa are loa, *aibobo*!

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Cousin, oh, cousin, oh,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

[436] (A *gourdain* is one-quarter of a gourde, or the equivalent of five cents in United States money. *Dé gourdain* is ten cents.)

[198] Example 141 consists entirely of ritual language.

Example 142

Call Damballa, call Domici, call Damballa Wèdo,
Damballa, call Damballa Wèdo, Damballa.

● [776] (Damballa and Domici are the names of loa.)

Example 143

Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am the patriarch, oh, I am the patriarch, oh,
I am the chief of my house!

[776] [192] (Ibo is the name of a loa, from whose point of view the song is being sung. Ibo is stating his seniority in his house, or family, for there are other loa related to him. The word *grand* in Creole, as used here, is difficult to translate. It means good or elder, or both. A *grand famille* is the oldest in the extended family, and usually carries the connotation of head or chief.)

Example 144

Ibo Ibo é, Samardi Kama!
Etc.

[776] (Samardi Kama is the name of a loa of the Ibo family. The song consists of a repetition of his name, with variations.)

Example 145

Ibo Ibo é, Marianni é!
Etc., with variations.

[776] (This is a song to the loa Marianni, of the Ibo family. Except for his name, in various combinations, there are no words.)

[198] [789] Example 146 is a song for the making of magic. It is entirely in ritual language.

Example 147

Call Osange, call Labosan in the water!
Osange, oh, call Osange in the water!
Osange, oh, call Osange in the water!

(A song for the loa Osange. Literally, the song specifies Osange "in the water," but the sense is "under the water," where the loa reside. 533 539 [192]

Example 148

Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see [enter through] the center post if they *djagwé!*
Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see the center post if they *djagwé!*
Ferei doesn't see me any more!
I will see the center post if they *djagwé!*

(Yabofé and Ferei are the names of loa. Even though addressed as [776] "Yabofé my dear," it is Yabofé who is speaking. If one thinks of it as "Dear Yabofé says," the shifting point of view becomes less confusing. The term *djagwé* indicates a kind of tension and excitement which builds up before possessions take place. Yabofé says that if the people *djagwé* he is prepared to enter through the center post.)

Example 149

Take me (to go), oh!
To the house, oh!

Example 150

Damballa! Damballa!
Damballa Wèdo Damballa!
Damballa, *enhé!*
Sacred Damballa! Damballa!

(The song is an invocation to the loa Damballa. The word *enhé* is [782] exclamatory.) [192]

Example 151

Ibo Lélé, oh!

(Ibo Lélé is the name of a loa.)

Example 152

We thread our way [like a snake],
Damballa Wèdo is a snake, oh!

(The "threading" is a description of conventionalized dance movements suggesting the crawling of a snake. The loa Damballa is identified as a snake.) [535] [776]

Example 153

Lake Sindé asks for wind, é!

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Wind, wind, wind, Loko Sindé asks for wind!
Wind, wind, wind!

● [776] (The loa Loko Sindé calls for wind to make the sailboat move.)

Example 154

Innocent, don't you see I'm innocent!
It is God in heaven who will judge me!
Innocent, don't you see I'm innocent!
It is God in heaven who will judge me!
Ferei's goat here looks for the water road!
The goat of the saints seeks the road to the house!
In Africa everyone is sick, oh!
Papa, I will save them!

Example 155

Marianni, oh!
Adié, Moundongue!
Marianni!
To the other side I am passing!
I am leaving here!

[776] (This is a song to the loa Marianni Moundongue. He says he is leaving the hounfor to return to the other side—that is, Africa.)

Example 156

Azui, oh, I am a snake, oh!
Azui Papa, I am a snake, oh!
Azui, oh, I am a snake, oh!
Azui Papa, I am a snake, oh!
Don't you see the pouin there is spoiled?
Don't you see the pouin there is spoiled?
It has rolled into the mud!
I sound my asson!

[776] (Azui is a loa characterized as a snake. The second part of the song is topical. It appears that a pouin, or magic bundle, has fallen into the mud and been soiled. The last line represents words of the houngan, who shakes his ritual rattle.)

Example 157

Ah! It is I, it is I, it is I!
It is I, oh, it is Mademoiselle Ayida, it is I!
Sitting by the boat there they speak ill of us (me), oh!
It is I, oh, it is I, centerpost, it is I!

[776] (Mademoiselle Ayida is the loa Ayida Wèdo.)

533 **Example 178**
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Osan, oh, Lèlè, oh!
Osan, ah, Lèlè, oh!
They take the asson of the loa and serve evil, oh!
Let it sink!

[626] (The song criticizes someone who has become a houngan and has used his
[776] powers wrongly. Osan Lèlè is the loa to whom the complaint is being addressed, or he may be the one lodging the complaint.)

Example 179

Farmer, call the loa for me, *ago-é!*
Farmer, call the loa for me now,
Call the loa for me now,
Gèdé has engaged me!

[776] (Gèdé is a loa. *Habitant* signifies "farmer" or "peasant" but could be trans-
[192] lated as "countryman.")

Example 180

Boulicha, I arrive,
See my misfortune!
I will cut them, I have no knife!
Boulicha Nago, I will cut them, *malovié!*

[776] (The loa Boulicha Nago announces his arrival and complains that people
have mistreated him. He says he will avenge himself without a knife.
[198] *Malovié* is ritual language.)

Example 181

I am going to see the hounsi bossale, oh,
I am going to see if they are in accord with me.
Etc.

Example 182

I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
All who speak well [of me], I am here, I will listen, oh!
All who speak evil [of me], I am here, I will listen to them!
They sign my name, Allada, but they do not sign my feet,
I ask where will they see me!

[p.349]

Notes

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CHAPTER 1: *The Making of the Haitian (pp. 1-7)*

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[1] The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2] Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data [113]
found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: [175]
20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,652 from Gambia, 6,777 from [162]
"Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,860 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those [567]
shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3] Bartolomé de Las Casas.

CHAPTER 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun (pp. 8-18)*

[1] See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 7.

[2] Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exorcists and conjurors [113]
are called *ganga*." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes [793]
and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of *ganga* have in Bantu the meaning 'medicine' [787]
but also 'magic'—such as Nyika *ganga* and Kongo *nganga*." [171]

[3] Gorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 129; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4] From the Fon *houn-so* or *houn-su*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-su* was re- [171]
garded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some [794]
instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5] Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 57-59.

[6] Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for [114]
Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of [78]
this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7] Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period [114]
as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the [174]
field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were [175]
already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit [771]
evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian [793]
soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the
eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly
African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

CHAPTER 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains (pp. 19-29)*

[1] The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) 776
usage. The term *hounaið*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root 192

776 192 as *hounfor, hounsi, houngénicon, hountor,* etc. *Mystère* is of obvious French origin. *Loa* is probably from the Bantu, but it could be from the Yoruba.

[2] Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a loa. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Vodun Service in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist,* XLII, 242–243), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a loa sometimes results in a contest between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *mait' tête* to come in, he must neutralize the ritual barriers the "horse" has put in the way. "One procedure for bringing on possession in a servant who has tried to 'tie' his chief god is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a sacrificial stone. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he unties the knots in his handkerchief [the method he has used for 'tying' his loa]."

000 [3] Herskovits, *Dahomey.*

CHAPTER 4: *Death Rites (pp. 30–40)*

775 171 113 [1] Maurice Delafosse, *L'Ame nègre.* Translation from *Free France,* special issue No. 4, French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1945.

[2] Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo,* recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

000 [3] Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu,* pp. 88–89.

[191] [769] [775] [113] [4] W. M. Eiselen and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa,* p. 250.

[5] Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti,* p. 212.

[6] Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley,* pp. 213–214.

[7] Hall and others, *Haitian Creole,* American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188–189.

[8] Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore,* April–June, 1946, pp. 155–162.

[9] As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.,* p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155.

[10] Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[11] This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.,* p. 156.

[764] [766] [793] [776] [787] [525] [12] These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Vodoun priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mayamba* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, ashes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[13] Simpson, *op. cit.,* p. 159.

[14] *Ibid.,* p. 161.

[15] Herskovits, *op. cit.,* p. 208.

[764] [766] [114] [16] Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[17] Simpson, *op. cit.,* p. 161.

[18] Leyburn, *The Haitian People,* p. 156.

[19] Herskovits, *Dahomey,* I, 398.

[20] *Ibid.,* pp. 397–398.

[21] Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley,* p. 214.

[22] Hall and others, *op. cit.,* p. 173.

CHAPTER 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (*pp. 41–74*)

[1] Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *prèt' savane.* 000

[2] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3] Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Hayti.*

[4] Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro.

[5] Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6] Account given by Voluska Saintvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it." [534] [178] [179] [171]

[7] The rite of *rafraîchi tête* is conducted periodically for a *mait' tête* after the original *lavé tête* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee. [782] [796] [783] [776]

[8] Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 233.

[9] It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10] Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

CHAPTER 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (*pp. 75–94*)

[1] This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

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CHAPTER 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (*pp. 95–104*)

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[1] Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.

[2] Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm. [776] [769] [797]

[3] Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 503.

[4] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

CHAPTER 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (*pp. 105–109*)

[1] Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42.

[2] Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan. [171] [541] [536]

CHAPTER 9: *Land and Work* (*pp. 110–131*)

[1] Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, p. 362. 583

[2] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and 171 595 423 178

080 CHAPTER 18: *Musical Instruments* (*pp. 189–202*)

[1] Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, p. 87. The stick is also known in Surinam.

[2] Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville.

[3] Library of Congress album, *Folk Music of Venezuela.*

[4] Pamphlet accompanying recordings, *Music of Equatorial Africa* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950).

[5] See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," *Musical Quarterly*, April, 1942, pp. 233–234.

[6] Camhaire Sylvain, *Les Contes haitiens*, pp. 97–98.

[7] Curt Sachs, *Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 60–61.

[8] Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, I, 287.

[9] Informant: Sohihas Toré, Bamako.

[10] See Courlander, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

APPENDIX 1: *The Pantheons* (*pp. 335–349*)

[1] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 245 ff.

[2] See Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, pp. 47–49; and Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 245 ff.

[3] Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

[4] Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 152 ff.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 101 ff.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 201 ff.

[7] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, p. 67.

[8] Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 105 ff.

[9] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 45, 67 ff.

[10] Library of Congress Recording No. 101.

[11] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, p. 47; W. R. Bascom, in Introduction to record album *Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950).

[12] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 38 ff.

[13] Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 71–74; Herskovits, *op. cit.*, I, 37.

[14] Herskovits, *Life In a Haitian Valley*, p. 267.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 280.

[16] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 108–109.

[17] Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, p. 68.

[18] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 79–80.

[19] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 165 ff. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, p. 83, says that this deity was especially important in the town of Agbome.

[20] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 45, 76.

[21] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 104.

[22] Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 71–74.

[23] Saint-Méry, *De la dance*, p. 48.

[24] Gorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 188.

● 776 [25] Red eyes as a symbol of malevolence appear in the folklore of many Negro cultures.
538 Our own American ballad about the gambler Stackalee states:

171 "The judge says, 'Stackalee, I would spare your life,
826 But I know you're a bad man, I can see it in your red eyes.' "

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except 771
for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly 171
have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily 174
life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple
black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was
chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the
colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The [776]
Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the [796]
worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. [535]
Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the
validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No
hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these
were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a
Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the
composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever 174
considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a 535
faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. 796
Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly [192]
enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal [114]
diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were
"superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the
word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not
regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use 175
the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their
dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, 669
gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample 567
opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for 202
revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro 793
Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, 771
which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing
but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance
in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one
plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity
of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and
language, by the Vodun background. 114

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been 175
rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who 669
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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But
669 when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against
668 their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a
[793] ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

776 As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their
793 own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the
761 spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that
782 when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to
781 explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial
[789] patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

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[171] [781] [8] A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

[114] [781] [9] The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

for Vodun theology, nor any established order for the service, 771
variety is one of its chief characteristics. Impossible as it is to cite a definitive list of Vodun beliefs, those most generally held might be combined into a Creed, which would run about as follows:

> I believe in scores of gods and spirits, guardians of earth and sky, and of all things visible and invisible;
>
> I believe that all these vodun (who are called "loa" or "mystères") are potent, although less majestic than *le bon Dieu* of the Christians; that some of them came with our ancestors from our former home in Africa, while others we have learned about in our Haitian fatherland; that these loa have power to possess us, their worshipers, informing us by inspiration of their needs and desires, which we must faithfully satisfy; that these loa, like us, are capable of good and evil, gentleness and anger, mercy and revenge;
>
> I believe in the efficacy of sacrifice; in the pleasures of living; in respect due to twins; in the careful cult of the dead, who may return to our abodes; in the spiritual causation of diseases and misfortune; in the dance through which we may be "mounted" by our loa; in the possibility of interfering with the normal flow of events by means of magic; in the efficacy of charms and spells; and in the Holy Catholic Church.

Those who conceive of religion in terms of a rigid orthodoxy, 771
monotheism, sin, a moral law, eternal rewards or punishments, will 177
not understand Haitian Vodun. It is as hospitable to new spiritual
conceptions as any faith could be, requiring only that the additions 776
be applicable to life as it is lived in the Haitian hills and valleys, and that they adapt their shape and terminology to the native penchant. Monotheism is rarely the practical belief of simple people, but rather of prophets and scholars. It is easy enough to believe in an all-powerful god but much more difficult to arrive at a conception of a unique God. In Dahomey the people had reached some such stage of belief in omnipotence but not of uniqueness. When later, in slavery, transplanted Africans heard the Catholic doctrine of a god who ruled creation by the fiat of his conquering will, they assimilated the idea with a significant change: the Christian God became the Great Master of the other gods. The slaves very simply placed Him at the
head of their pantheon. Even today, the first words of a Vodun [796]
service are the request for permission from the Great Master to go on 114
with the service. As Dorsainvil says: 178

> This term chosen to designate the supreme God was imposed on them by 776
> their environment. The colonist, the master, incarnated for the slave the

114 178 776 highest idea of power and action. Logically, he could not conceive of the unique God of the Christians, by analogy and by inspiration, except in terms of the sentiment of fear mingled with the awe which the colonist inspired in him. Once this first step was taken, the rest was only the work of time. In the degree that the holy beings of Catholicism were unfolded to them, the creole Negroes everywhere identified these with the *vodun* (spirits) of the Dahomean cult.[19]

771 776 The Christian God could not stop the "deifying" process, for Vodun must have simple spiritual explanations for daily occurrences. How could a god who ruled the earth clutter his mind with such small details as the mango crop or one's private aches? There was room of necessity for more, and lesser, gods.

771 781 Orthodoxy and monotheism, then, are alien to Vodun; so likewise are the notions of sin and a moral law. These also are refined ideas. The Catholic priests do their best to instill into the minds of the people the Church doctrine on these points, but gluttony, envy, sloth, and other deadly sins are not easy to explain to a people whose worldly goods are pitifully few, whose bellies are never full, and who must work hard to live at all. Just how the simple Haitian interprets the fulminations of the fathers against sin a foreigner can hardly tell, and the priests are not at liberty to reveal the secrets of the confessional.[20] A peasant loves life. His pleasures are simple enough, partly because he lacks money for expensive ones. Puritanical self-searching is alien to the normal Haitian. The touchstone is infallible: so long as life moves along smoothly one need not worry; if misfortune comes, one of the spirits is angry or out of sorts and his worshipers must propitiate him. What spirit could mind a man's dancing, drinking clairin, watching a cockfight, or otherwise indulging himself?

771 776 Vodun does not conceive life to be a struggle between good and evil. Its conception of spirits is anthropomorphic. No man is wholly good or wholly evil, nor is any god; human beings can generally be persuaded into any mood, and so can the gods; as there is variety in human personality, so likewise the gods are not immutable. Some are more to be feared than others, some may be regarded with tender affection, but all are capable of working both weal and woe.

[19] Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[783] [20] A priest once told me that a young Haitian girl in sorrow confessed, as her most heinous sin, that she had given food to a dog. Apparently her idea was that food was too precious to be given away to animals; hence she had sinned.

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A gentle spirit may cause great harm to a person who neglects his 771
commands, while a spirit whose power makes possible the most 776
malignant magic may bring good fortune to his devotee. By conceiving his spirits as in manner and desires resembling himself, the Haitian can understand his little universe without subjecting himself to the bewilderment which faces a simple Christian trying to reconcile an all-loving Father with the obvious evil He allows on earth.

One must approach Vodun without the religious preconceptions of Christianity or Judaism. Suspending our notions of orthodoxy, monotheism, sin, heaven, and hell, we may examine more closely the creed suggested above, in an endeavor to round out its real meaning to the Haitian.

"I believe in gods and spirits . . ." The white man would recognize most easily among the Haitian's multiple gods the God of Christianity whom every Vodun worshiper confesses. It is this God who is meant in the homely expression of native acceptance of one's lot: "*Bon Dieu bon*"—the good God is really good, however remote. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are likewise acknowledged, although it seems probable that they do not touch the hearts of people as much as the Great Master. The Blessed Virgin, on the other hand, is very real and near—so real, in fact, that she is sometimes actually merged with a spirit of African origin who has many of the Virgin's storied characteristics. Certain angels and a select group of Christian saints have made a special appeal and so found their niche in Vodun; others are not denied but merely ignored because the Haitian is not well acquainted with them.

To the spirits (one hesitates to use such misleading words as "gods" 776
or "divinities") not drawn from Christianity the name "loa" is 174
applied. There seem in general to be two classes of these: those who 192
have an African origin, and those with a Haitian background only. The former group is called "Rada," the latter "Pétro." The word Rada is derived from the principality of Allada in Dahomey, and would seem thus to indicate that all the Rada loa were Dahomean; this, however, is definitely not the case. Numerous loa can be traced to the Congo region and others to the smaller West African districts, yet all of these are indiscriminately called Rada. In current usage, accordingly, the word has lost its strict geographical significance.
The term Pétro is explained in an illuminating paragraph by the [192
Haitian savant, Dr. Dorsainvil: 114]

114 The common people of Haiti are continually creating [his phrase is much more revealing: "en gestation de"] *loa*, or new Vodoun "saints." Popular
196 tradition, long before independence, refers to a certain Don Pédro, a being
174 of flesh and blood who from the Spanish end of the island had come at a
● 776 certain period to live in the mountains of the commune of Petit-Goâve. This Don Pédro was the man who introduced into Haiti that violent dance which, by corruption, the people call "the pétro." Upon his death, Don Pédro came to occupy an honorable place in the Vodoun pantheon, bringing in his train a whole group of progeny, such as Jean-Philippe Pétro, Criminel Pétro, etc.[21]

174 776 As might be logically deduced, certain powerful ancestors become deified as Pétro loa.

It would require field trips into every district of Haiti to compile a
184 776 full list of the various loa who receive homage from Haitians; some appear to have only a local following, others are honored over a wide district, and a few are reverenced throughout the country. If Vodun ever reached the stage of founding a seminary of sacred theology—a highly improbable event—one of its most imperative functions would be the collection, classification, and explanation of the attributes of the hundreds of loa, specifying whether they are Haitian or African in origin, Pétro or Rada, powerful or complaisant, inclined prevailingly to benevolence or to malice. Lacking such a proper catalogue, it will suffice to mention only the most commonly accepted figures. In reflecting upon the characteristics of these gods, the well-informed reader will be struck by the numerous parallels to divinities of other faiths so remote that Haitians could not possibly have known of them; similar emotional needs seem to produce similar deities to satisfy them.[22]

776 Legba is the name of the loa most frequently invoked, not because he is the most powerful, but because he is the interlocutor between man and his gods. Before any ceremony may begin, Legba is addressed: "*Papa Legba, ouvri barrière pour nous.*" If he is not first worshiped, the other deities may not come to possess the people. Legba guards every door and gate, every highway and crossroads. He is still an important god in modern Dahomey, where his attributes are much the same as in Haiti. The people feel no necessity of

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21. Dorsainvil, op. cit., p. 46.

22. Classical anthropologists might have called this phenomenon "parallelism"; the word is accurate enough if only similarity, not identity, be understood.

making Legba (or any of their other loa) unusually handsome or admirable; he is, on the contrary, honored none the less because he is a lame old man who wanders about clothed in rags. His homely aspect seems to be a part of his comfortable nature: the "Papa" with which his invocation is prefaced, though not unusual in addressing loa, seems generally to be spoken with overtones of real affection, with the same feeling of kindliness one has for a benevolent uncle in the neighborhood. In parts of Haiti Legba is associated with the Catholic Saint Anthony.[23] As with other loa, there are special attributes, sacrifices, places, and traditions pertaining to him which are characteristic only of limited localities. 776

Erzulie is the most generally acknowledged female loa. She is especially interesting because of her resemblances to the Virgin Mary. Although she is Dahomean in origin, she is conceived as pale, almost white, probably by the influence of countless lithographs of the Virgin circulated in Haiti as in any other Catholic country. Erzulie is very wealthy, possessing many different dresses and much jewelry. In these aspects she is unique among the loa. It is quite possible that [554] there is a causal connection between the conception of lightness of color and that of wealth, for the only women who possess jewelry and large wardrobes in Haiti are the light-skinned élite; on the other hand, many pictures of the Virgin depict her in queenly robes and adorned with gems, so that the idea may have been derived principally from her. Erzulie is a trembling woman inhabiting the water. She seems to have no one specific function in connection with which she is worshiped, as with Legba, who guards thresholds; rather, she is approachable in a confidential way, as an understanding mistress might be. Her favorite color being white, all animals sacrificed to her are white, whether turkeys, chickens, or goats.

In somewhat the same manner as Christians conceive of their God in diverse manifestations—Christ as priest or king, God as father or judge—so the Haitians in a more direct, illogical, and naïve way, think of their loa in different manifestations. Maîtresse Erzulie, for example, seems to change her major characteristics altogether when she is Erzulie Gé-rouge (that is, the Red-eyed); then she is Pétro, not Rada; boisterous and rather hearty, not trembling.

The third loa, Damballa, is so prominent that some of the early

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[23] Price-Mars, op. cit., p. 180.

● 776 commentators thought him the most important Vodun god.[24] There
are two plausible reasons for this emphasis: Damballa is the bringer
of rain, a necessity for good crops but a menace resulting in desolating
floods when it is too copious; second, his symbol is the serpent.
To Christians this is a symbol of such long standing that it is easy to
assume in connection with its appearance in Vodun the guile,
diabolism, or occult force which it has at times represented in
Christian tradition. Damballa, however, is certainly not evil in the
same way as Satan; he is not even generally baleful. To honor him is
quite fitting, and this attitude is at poles removed from the diabolism
[136] of the Middle Ages. There are practically no snakes in Haiti. Because
of Damballa's symbol he is quite naturally associated with Saint
Patrick.[25] Like Maîtresse Erzulie, all his sacrificial animals must be
white, for this is his color. Like her, too, he is Dahomean in origin
and therefore Rada.

These three, Legba, Erzulie, and Damballa, can by no means be
conceived as a trinity. On the contrary, it would be easily possible
to select an entirely different group from the commonest loa, justifying
inclusions and eliminations. There is, for example, Ogun, the
god of war, who derives from Nigeria in Africa. Ogun can, if
properly persuaded, protect his petitioners against bullets and weapon
wounds. Like blood, he is red. This is also his favorite color, and so
he prefers sacrifices of red cocks and food offerings of red beans with
rice. There are likewise Damballa's wife, Ayida Oueddo, whose
symbol is the rainbow; Agwé, god of the sea; Baron Samedi, patron
spirit watching over cemeteries; Simbi, who lives in mango and
calabash trees and is a bit too fond of drink. In any one country
district, certain other loa might far outshine any of those mentioned.
The longer one lives among the people, the more clearly he sees the
validity of the first article of the creed: "I believe in gods and spirits."

787 "I believe that these loa have power to possess their worshipers
. . ." It is more difficult to make intelligible to "civilized" people
the phenomenon of possession than any other part of Vodun religion.
Centuries of training in self-control have made us unwilling to give
public vent to our emotions, whether religious or, indeed, of any
sort. Not only does our tradition of good manners inhibit such ex-

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[24] See, for example, Bonneau, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–26 n.
[25] He is sometimes also associated with Moses, who "lifted up the serpent in the wilderness."

7 96 steadying his attention, he practically hypnotizes him back into full
535 consciousness. As soon as the possessed is normal again, water out of
787 the calabash is poured at the central post and a sign of the cross is
made with the candle before it.

796 Contrary to the expectation of thrill-seeking white visitors, the
535 Vodun dance does not merit the name of an orgy. True, the dancers
786 wear their old clothes, for they are going to have violent exercise;
true also, those who are possessed give the impression of losing some
of their inhibitions. But the dancers do not embrace each other as at
a white man's dance; the drinking which occurs is hardly ever excessive;
and the climax of a successful dance is a religious experience.
[831] The Haitian is no more obsessed by sex than is the American; indeed,
living simply and without many of the artificial restraints of "civilization,"
he is probably less so. What white visitors sometimes see,
under the impression that they are witnessing a Vodun dance, is
nothing more than a secular Saturday night social dance. It, too, has
drum rhythms instead of an orchestra, musical instruments being
rare in Haiti; but the dance has no more religious (or "Voodoo")
significance than a barn dance in the United States.

771 Creed and practice go hand in hand in Haiti. The Vodun worshiper
776 believes in the loa of his faith and does the things necessary to
get in touch with them. These conceptions are the major part of his
creed, as the corresponding actions form the bulk of his religious
activity.

171 A few articles of the creed remain. "I believe in respect to twins
. . ." Hundreds of so-called primitive peoples see in twins some special
845 significance, now fortunate, now tragic. Many of the tribes along the
787 Atlantic coast of Africa thought of twins as an omen, so that the
presence of ritual regard for them in Haiti is hardly surprising. It is
probably incorrect to speak of the worship, or the cult, of twins, for
they are not deified, nor is there a common ritual for them: thousands
of persons pay them no homage whatever. One family has a
high regard for twins because it has numbered them among its
ancestors or recent relatives; another family pays respect to all twins
because a priest has advised seeking the good luck which comes from
[782] *marassa* (twins). There seems to be some confusion of thought about
this aspect of religion: twins are not gods, but merely omens from
the gods; yet sacrifices are made to them. Christmas and harvest are
the usual seasons for the offering. Food is prepared in the morning

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and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the 171
afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is 845
being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the 787
sacrifice. [782]

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is 761
necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief
to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both
death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion
from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to
confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows [166]
(on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for
example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside
and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with [181]
pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the
unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with
simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been
at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have 769
exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other 177
part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows
no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over [764]
the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic
priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual
efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks
of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult
begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the
dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power
comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and 114
ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all 116
the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives 169

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[30] W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 829.

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776 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover
769 gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.[31]

769 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would
765 cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would
775 be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not.
782 Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of
775 the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It
789 may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revivified by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the state-
798 ment: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.[32]

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[31] See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

[32] In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Dorsainvil, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

755 Specialists in the magic of healing sometimes hit upon remarkable remedies, just as those who concentrate upon causing ailments learn the most effective ways of poisoning a victim's body or, by suggestion, of ruining his peace of mind. In the soil of infinite belief in spiritual powers the seeds of suspicion take firm root.

754 776 [266] From the realm of recognized magic in which most natives at one time or another indulge, one crosses the threshold into a world of sorcery, perversion, and evil mystery. Here no normal person walks, for it is perilous ground. Here is no illumination from any loa or saint, but a grisly darkness coming down by tradition through centuries of whispered fear. From European folklore by way of French storytellers the Haitian peasant has taken the idea of the werewolf, whom he conceives always to be feminine. The male counterpart is the demon. These creatures are men and women who have a passion for eating human flesh and drinking human blood; cannibalism being abhorrent to normal persons, these abnormal ones through the blackest of magic are believed to be able to transform themselves into werewolves and demons, in which shape they glut themselves before effecting the change once more into human form. One does well to beware of persons with red eyes or black spots in the corner of the eye: these are the telltale marks of the cannibalistically inclined. No accredited ethnographer has ever received a direct report of encounter with werewolves or demons, but the haunting fear is present among the people. There is always an old man who lives in the next valley who has definite knowledge of them, and there are bocors who are "well known" to be able to give this vile power of lycanthropy to people. A person particularly afraid of werewolves will wear a special garde to ward off this evil.

754 776 From Africa comes the belief in the *baka*, an evil spirit who has a family resemblance to former Christian notions of the devil. The baka will make a bargain with a man, giving him some special power or greatly desired boon in return for the life of a member of his family. The bargain seems always to be cumulative, so that the mortal is never out of debt. When first one member of a family dies, and then a second and a third, the family is sure to consult a houngan in order to discover whether such an engagement exists. The knowledge apparently does little good, for the baka is always there at the appointed hour, mowing down one member after another until finally the bargainer himself is killed. One might wonder, since it is

generally believed that the compact always results fatally for the man 754
who makes it, why anyone should enter into such an engagement. 776
Craving for money or some other immediate form of power, however,
bedims the reason; in the face of all-consuming desire, more
than one man has been willing to ignore future pain for present reward.

It would be possible to conjure up a whole phantasmagoria of 789
weird belief in connection with magic, although this would be
unjust to the character of the Haitians. These people have their share
of dire concepts, but no more than might be expected of a simple
folk. One final magical belief must be treated, however, for it has
reached the ears of the outside world in grim detail. This is the belief [114]
in the *zombi*. The word, as Faine explains, comes from the Bonda [192]
language of Africa (*zumbi* there), and was probably transmitted to
Haiti by Portuguese slave traders. Faine continues:

> Zombi . . . designates in general a revenant, a phantom, an otherworldly 114
> spirit. In popular belief, certain sorcerers have the power, by means of 754
> charms and spells, to cause apparent death to individuals and then to bring
> them back to life again, even after they have been buried. These resuscitated
> persons, only half-conscious, are then, isolated in distant parts of the
> country, utilized for field work. Nourished on food from which salt is
> rigorously excluded, they are thought to be able to regain their natural
> senses and all their mental faculties if they taste the least grain of this substance.
> Such legends, circumstantially garbed and presented as actual facts
> by certain unscrupulous authors, have served as the theme of books which
> have made a great commotion in foreign countries. Taking advantage of
> the credulity of a public avid for exotic matters, for mysteries, for the
> supernatural, these writers have gained, in certain cases, the greatest success
> of publicity.[38]

Three attitudes are taken in regard to the zombi. There are skeptics 754
who deny the existence of zombis altogether, setting down as
fable most of the ideas current about them, and as mistaken diagnosis
all the remainder. There are the credulous (including practically
every peasant) who believe in and quite directly fear this potential
fate. And there are those who believe that certain bocors know how
to administer a subtle poison to intended victims which will cause
suspended animation and give the appearance of death. Men in the
prime of life suddenly sicken and die for no apparent reason. Once
these pseudo-corpses are safely buried, the sinister person who has

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[38] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

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pronounced; later the lightning will strike, the disease will come, the 754
child will die: the connection between curse and calamity will seem too obvious for contradiction. About certain persons is a look (some call it an aura) of evil which is almost palpable: folk belief has an explanation. For much of the mysterious coincidence in life a sophisticate will simply shrug his shoulders and attempt no explanation; he accepts his doctor's diagnosis or his lawyer's advice, and when these betray him falls back upon the many insurances of civilization. The Haitian needs an explanation for his ills, for he lacks doctors, lawyers, insurance: the explanation of magic may be incorrect, but it is the only one he has and it is backed up by events often enough to seem true.

Life is full of mishaps. The Haitian's loa are as real to him as the 776
mountains and trees of his country. It is not to be wondered, there- 789
fore, that the peasant thinks his loa directly responsible for much of
the evil that befalls. In this explanation the Haitian is not different 771
from millions of other people, even Christians. It would, however, be a great mistake to emphasize the fear in Vodun faith and in the magic which proceeds from it to such an extent that the bright side is forgotten. The gods are likewise responsible for the good luck of mankind. If a man deeply desires to attain a specific good, there is room in both religion and magic for that also. It may be the love of a girl, money to pay a debt, a propitious day for holding a *coumbite* (or coöperative working bee), the birth of a son instead of a daughter: religion and magic avail for all of these, more with some individuals than with others. When an entire community holds a belief, the magic has a double chance of working. It is easier for a man to win his wife if she knows he is working magic to that end, than to persuade her without magic. This kind of magic is also easier to work than that which depends wholly upon the complaisance of the loa, as when rain is needed for crops at the proper time.

Religion, with its sister magic, is not for the Haitian a matter of 771
special days, vague abstractions, or formal propriety. It is a daily strength for daily needs.

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Catholicism. I have seen such an altar, with its adjacent table, bearing 796
a crucifix, candles, (holy) water, lithographs of the "Assumption of [778]
the Virgin," "St. George and the Dragon," the "Adoration of the [192]
Kings," and certain unrecognized but distinctly European saints; in addition to these objects, however, were such unecclesiastical articles as bananas, rice, beans, squash, various bottles of drinks, and plates of food. Near by were the sacrificial animals.

Vodun makes use frequently of one sacrament of the Church— [177]
baptism. Needless to say, this rite is not a monopoly of Christianity, and its use in the folk religion may very well have come from Africa. Constant witnessing of the rite in church must nevertheless have influenced its adoption for all important Vodun ceremonials. The drums used in the dance are baptized; so also is the first loa to possess a devotee; at many other special times the rite is likewise performed, generally with a set of prayers which invoke Catholic saints and Vodun loa alike.

Mention has already been made of the identification of Rada and 776
Pétro loa with certain saints and martyrs of the Church. Such identi- 177
fications are not uniform, but vary in different parts of the country. [184]
Legba is generally associated with Saint Anthony, but often (and to the Christian, more understandably) with Saint Peter who traditionally guards the gates of heaven; the Virgin Mary quite obviously is related, whether as Queen of Heaven, as the Sorrowing Mother, or as the innocent Virgin, with numerous manifestations of Maîtresse Erzulie; Damballa, whose symbol is the serpent, is sometimes Moses (whose brother's rod became a serpent consuming other serpents, and who by lifting up a serpent in the wilderness cured the people of their snake bites) and sometimes Saint Patrick (whose association with snakes is well known). Other identifications are numerous, showing the penchant of the people for combining what they know of both religions.[2]

Many of the loa have, like the Catholic saints, their symbols, their special days, colors, and other associations. Some like white, some red; the serpent, the rainbow, the crossroads are among the symbols; sacred days occur weekly, Tuesday being Legba's, Wednesday Ogun's, Friday Erzulie's, and Saturday Baron Samedi's. It may be

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[2] The distinguished Haitian ethnographer, sociologist, and historian, Dr. Jean Price-Mars, has made a list of some of these identifications in his *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, pp. 180–181.

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776 that Catholic practice in these matters did no more than to fortify
177 an African tendency already in evidence; indeed, it is a common tendency of folk religions anywhere to associate days and colors with their honored spirits. The very similarity of conventions indicates the ease with which borrowing of religious ideas might occur.

778 Every Catholic priest is well aware of the hold Vodun has upon the people, just as all desire to see the ultimate triumph of the Church. The battle is unending, but the method of attack varies. Open firmness is the approach favored by some priests, subtle indirection by others. Sermons against Vodun do little good apparently, for the faith of the worshipers is sufficient to maintain in their own minds the validity of what the preachers inveigh against. When zealous clerics cut down trees sacred to Damballa or try otherwise to eradicate signs and symbols of the loa, the people have rarely tried to stop them; but when the slightest bad luck comes to the iconoclasts—and misfortune comes to every man sooner or later—the people are quick to interpret the stroke as the loa's punishment for the desecration of holy things. On one occasion a shrine was destroyed, the priest calling in an American officer to shoot at a supposed apparition of the Virgin: shortly thereafter the priest's house was burned to the ground, the priest himself suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered, and the captain was ordered back to the United States, "as a punishment for what he had done," said the people. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc*—what followed was a direct consequence of what had gone before; this has been the basis of belief from time immemorial. Who shall say it was not cause and effect? Similar cases have been numerous. One concludes that the method of direct assault will never achieve its purpose.

Subtlety of attack, on the other hand, requires infinite patience, infinite willingness to compromise for the present. Both are qualities which the Catholic Church has amply demonstrated in times past. Certain of the priests whose parishes include country districts are masters in the art of patient indirection, willing to accept apparent failure in their lifetime in the hope of ultimate victory for the Church. Their method is to discover which Vodun practices are of prime importance and, ignoring minor beliefs and practices, slowly lure—not intellectually persuade—the people away from them. This process may be clearly illustrated by a service in the hills in 1937.

A Catholic chapel had been erected in recent years upon a hilltop